

APR 17 1911
VOL 34 No 1

NO TITLE-PAGE & INDEX ISSUED

MAY

1911

PRICE 25cts



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OF

For Ten Years

satisfied with the literary quality of the SMART SET, its legion of readers have tolerated this cover design.

But a Magazine of Cleverness should be clever from cover to cover. To make it so will be the endeavor of the new publisher.

Buy this issue and read page 175.

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Looking Forward—

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TAKE a good long look at this May number of the **SMART SET**. It's the last time you'll see it in its present dress. Next month we're putting on our party clothes.

Make a note on your desk calendar for an esthetic treat somewhere around May 15th.

But all this is told elsewhere. Come, take an advance peep at the literary contents of the June number. Here are some of the important features:

"When Woman Proposes"—By Anne Warner. A complete novel by this talented writer, who is well known as one of the very cleverest of the present generation of novelists. Her stories are more than merely well told and interesting; they are filled with sparkle and possess a delightful tang that affords a delicious sense of enjoyment.

This latest story of Miss Warner's is a remarkable piece of imaginative work. The title itself implies something a little out of the ordinary. Suffragettes may take encouragement from it—though it's not exactly that kind of story, either. In fact, though its incidents are complex and its surroundings full of variety, it's just merely a story of one man and one woman—or perhaps, in view of what's said above, we should reverse this precedence.

Anyhow, we've all enjoyed reading it. So will you.

Gelett Burgess, the "bromide" man and author of "The Purple Cow," comes to bat again with a fresh instalment of "Maxims of Methuselah." Everyone recalls the big hit these maxims made a few years ago. Why say more?

Mrs. Poultney Higelow's latest story, "The Last Expedient," is an intense tale of a mother and a daughter honorably in love with the same man. Imagine the complications that may ensue!

Michael White, in "His Casté," gives an impressive picture of what an Occidentalized Hindoo faces on his return to India.

"Repression," by Philippa Lyman, is a spirited essay that will cause wide discussion. A previous essay by this clever woman brought us an avalanche of letters, some opposing her conclusions, others praising her courage in pointing out some perhaps unpleasant truths regarding this strange thing we call human nature.

Louise Closser Hale's one-act play, "The Other Woman"; **Mary Heaton Vorse's** tremendously realistic story, "The Highest Proof"; poems by **Richard Le Gallienne** and **Joaquin Miller**; a brilliant satire on a popular fad, by **Mrs. Wilson Woodrow**; and stories, verses and humorous sketches by **Mary Glascock**, **Frederic Taber Cooper**, **Vanderheyden Fyles**, **Theodosia Garrison** and others constitute a literary feast that will tickle a quarter of a million palates.

The table will be spread the middle of May. Be on time.

Don't fail to get the June Number.

J.K. MAPAI

S.M. 8/E/12

Vol. XXXIV

No. 1

THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

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Yearly Subscription \$3.00

Single Copies 25 Cents

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Entered at New York Post Office as second class mail matter

Issued monthly by John Adams Thayer Corporation

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MARK VENABLE'S SON

By OLIVIA HOWARD DUNBAR

OUTSIDE, through the high windows, the sparse apple orchard and the bright hillside beyond had the excited radiance of the middle of May. The fresh, sweet scent of moist earth drifted teasingly in through the half-open outer door. It was the Venables' immense pride that, although they were only thirty-five minutes from New York and seven from the railroad station, their own small outlook and atmosphere were so completely pastoral. This was, of course, the usual suburban formula, but their air of artless discovery in repeating it found always indulgent listeners.

It was early morning, or what in the city would have seemed early, but Mark Venable, working rapidly at a half-evoked clay figure that rose, a dim, uncouth shape, in the middle of the great shedlike studio, showed that his day had begun a good while before. He was a small man with a humorous, tired face and rough brown hair and beard; he had that pleasant shaggy quality that makes a man's age difficult to guess. His evident abstraction from the medley of sounds that came with almost perfect distinctness through the closed door leading to the house beyond would have seemed phenomenal to one who did not know that he had had years to acquire it in. The voices of Mark Venable's entirely healthy children were always unsubdued. The cramped fingers of one or more of them were always stumbling through exercises on the old tinkling piano. And it was always a new maid-servant whose loud, good-natured voice was demanding instruction in duties to which she was unaccountably strange. There was even no effect of detachment

in the studio itself. It had a disconcerting number of doors and you felt that people were accustomed to open them without ceremony. Therefore the sculptor could scarcely be expected to look up as often as anyone entered his undefended stronghold; but he did look up and smile and drawl "Hello, Miss Bourne!" when there came in through the outer door, at a slow, swaying gait, a young woman who had found it unnecessary to announce herself. Charlotte Bourne, for all her wide-open eyes, looked like a woman within whose undeliberately selective vision it would be rather difficult to range oneself; one felt likewise that whatever she might arrive at seeing she would behold intently. Finding the sculptor already hours deep in work, she paused, and in a voice of genuine concern challenged his unseasonable industry.

"Why, the light was unusually good this morning." He defended himself lightly. "And we're weeks behindhand. I had to."

"And I suppose you went to work without reading the morning papers?" A faint smile shot through her earnestness. Her air was deferential, yet accustomed. As she spoke, she slipped off her long coat, threw it on a bench in the corner and began to unfold the newspapers she had brought.

"You mean we've been getting into print?" Venable's tone was indulgent toward her preoccupation, but he did not again look away from his work.

"But you scarcely can have expected to avoid it," she observed quietly, "with the ceremony coming this afternoon. Or had you forgotten it is this afternoon?" She glanced at him with sudden

suspicion, caught the trail of a fugitive smile and went on, reassured. "Here it is. And it's the sort of thing you won't despise. There's something here that I think Blaisdell must have written; it's really capable and discerning, leaves out all the familiar twaddle and winds up with oh, such a eulogy of 'Democracy'! Let me read you—"

Venable dropped his tools and raised both arms in a droll, appealing gesture.

"Miss Bourne, I can't let you read that sort of thing aloud. As if 'Democracy' weren't your work as much as it is mine! I've never known you as diligent before in hunting up praise for yourself."

"How absurd of you, Mr. Venable!" The girl laughed without losing any of her seriousness. "And what shall I do if you won't listen? I'll run in and show them to Mrs. Venable if you think she would—"

She paused. The sculptor looked rather nervously toward the door at the end of the room. "Why, I imagine she'll be in presently. She's busy now, I believe, with Lawrence—"

"Oh—is he ill?" Charlotte turned away, caught up her long working apron and slipped it over her smooth, brown head.

"Ill? Oh, no. Sound as he can be." The explanation came with evident readiness and pleasure. "But the boy isn't used to our—vociferous domesticity. You know what lusty young savages our children are, temperaments that can't be repressed after five in the morning, and all that. So Lawrence, after losing half his sleep, stays in bed to rest a little, and his mother takes him some breakfast—"

"Oh, I see." She spoke slowly. "It's to indulge his mother, doubtless. Mr. Venable, what an astonishingly different look she has since he came!"

"Have you noticed it?" Venable quickly caught her up. "I've never seen Alex wear quite that constant look of enraptured maternity. Of course, she's scarcely glanced at the rest of us since Lawrence landed. But poor girl—when she hasn't seen her oldest boy for five years—"

The man paused a moment and stood

upright, his hands by his sides, as though he were trying to call up some pictorial image of those absent years of Lawrence's.

Charlotte Bourne watched him curiously as he sought his work again, his face wearing a mask of seriousness that she had rarely seen. How odd it was that nothing in the world had seemed able to seize and awe that light, selfless spirit of his until the coming of his Wonder-child. And now the merest mention of Lawrence was enough to set this spell upon him.

"You know we both feel that it's been a hard pull for the poor boy," Venable went on in his softly deliberate speech. "A young artist who has the real thing inside him deserves, needs so much; and we have been able to do so little—so little. But, after all, there's a fire that can't be quenched—that's what we believe, isn't it?"

"But you've given him such priceless things," Charlotte gently protested. "How intensely he must value your belief in him! And it must be such a joy to him to have come home in time for the unveiling. I'm sorry I haven't heard him talk about the statue. What does he say, Mr. Venable?"

The sculptor looked up in a quick, almost frightened way. "Oh, he's not seen it—he's not seen it."

"Not seen 'Democracy'!"

Venable smiled as he met her blank expression. "I thought I had confessed to you before," he explained, in his characteristic, informal speech, "that I'm pretty well scared of Lawrence. You know how it is, Miss Bourne. After all, the boy's been *taught*, which is more than his father has, and he's seen just about all the things his father hasn't seen. So it's all very well for him to see the finished work, and he will see it—today. But I wasn't willing that he should see a sketch of the thing, or even a photograph. He's got to see it at its best. Why, I want him to think well of me."

A gentle touch opened the door connecting with the house, and a woman, producing a curious, almost painful effect of ravaged loveliness, came in. She was not beautiful; she had been worn

too thin; the attrition had been too harsh. But as she moved and turned you caught definite suggestions of the beauty she must have had perhaps twenty years before, and that, poor woman, she had once been taught to dress for. There was a conscientious recollection of those earlier precepts in the simple garments that she wore now. But even the outlines that people must once have praised her for had pitifully lost their saliency.

Her husband, hearing her step, asked quickly: "Is the boy rested?"

"He says that he is," the mother answered, in a voice softer than Venable's own—a voice that, even more than her appearance, recalled a time when she had been beautiful—more than this, it told in an odd but unmistakable way of a time when she had been luxuriously comfortable. A woman who struggles in her youth with privation does not later acquire this voice of velveted bronze. "He got a nap after the children went out and had his breakfast, and I imagine he will be down shortly."

"Tell him, please, I want to see him a little later."

Mrs. Venable waited nervously a moment, then decided, as usual, that it couldn't matter much if Miss Bourne did hear. Were there any of their sordid difficulties, for that matter, that this stranger had not already come upon?

"Mark—"

"Yes."

"I suppose you're very busy, dear, but the dairyman is waiting outside. The account really is several weeks overdue. And it seems preposterously large."

"Good Lord, isn't there any money?" Venable asked, with a certain effect of surprise, but with obviously no profound concern.

"There was a little—but there were some things poor Lawrence needed—"

"I'll see what I can do with him." And with miraculous good nature Venable hurried out of the studio. His wife stood hesitating.

Charlotte Bourne looked up with an air of bright, deliberate courtesy. "This

is going to be a wonderful day, Mrs. Venable."

"Oh, yes." The older woman looked toward the open door and smiled faintly. "I'm sure the apple blossoms will be out by night."

"But I mean—the unveiling." The words came with unconsidered emphasis.

"Oh, of course. But I don't think I shall be able to go into town. Little Marcia has a sore throat—and nothing has been ordered yet for dinner."

"Why, Mrs. Venable, what can you mean?" Charlotte was sternly impatient of subterfuge, and it seemed to her that Mrs. Venable continually wove these palpable unnecessary webs. "Surely on this one day—if there are matters here that need attention I can stay in your place."

The offer was conditional, and though gently spoken it was plainly made in no spirit of sympathy. A long moment of silence followed it. In all their fragmentary intercourse the two women had never spoken to each other with entire freedom. But now, seized by a swift impulse, the older one let fall her usual manner of cool forbearance and turned a candid, beseeching face to the other.

"Miss Bourne—please don't urge me to go. Lawrence might come in—and I couldn't bear to have him hear. I couldn't bear to have him know how it is. Men of course can't understand such things—but the truth is that I've nothing to wear into town. I mean literally nothing. You know, for instance, how it is with hats. Yesterday I tried to make one over so that I could go out with Lawrence, and when it was done I put it on and looked at it—and cried!"

This confession, childish, painful but unmistakably sincere, threw an immediate bridge between the two antipathetic temperaments. For Alexandra Venable there may have been a certain luxury in momentarily disarming this overexcellent young woman who judged and interfered. And on Charlotte's part there was a rush of embarrassed tenderness. How often under the Venables' roof she had come upon such sharply tragic trifles as this—that a head like this proud creature's, a head that had

always cajoled clay and invited marble, should be humiliated now for want of some commonplace arrangement to conceal its distinction!

"Dear Mrs. Venable"—she tried to express the warmth that she suddenly felt—"if you only knew how lovely you always look—"

"Don't say that. Oh, please don't say that! But you know I go out so little. Mark always goes alone. Do you suppose anyone will really notice if I am not there? I cannot wear that hat—I cannot! It's odd that I'm not able to make one, isn't it, when other women do. But I've never had a chance to learn. Before I married there was no need, and since then there has never seemed to be time for anything, with the babies always about. Miss Bourne—don't marry an artist!"

Charlotte flushed and turned away. It seemed as though a strong physical effort were necessary to prevent disagreeable things from bolting from her mouth whenever she talked with Mrs. Venable. Yet a moment before she had felt, if not a liking, at least a genuine compassion.

"It's all right, Alex," Venable dropped lightly as he came in and returned to his work. "He'll wait another week, the importunate beggar! Isn't it just our luck, dear, that all our children should happen to like milk? Why couldn't some of them have hated it?"

"Poor darlings, they haven't much besides," their mother observed with the peculiar softness that always irritated Charlotte, and left the room.

Venable turned toward the young woman the boyish, whimsical look that was so familiar to her.

"How do fellows work," he affected to inquire, "who have studios entirely separate from their houses? Why, if I had a place of that sort I should get to imagine myself a mere artist—have all sorts of airs. What keeps me at work is the fortunate opportunity I have to see the vital and pressing necessity for it. Don't look like that," he added in a different tone. "I mean, don't pay any attention to the things I say. Really, you ought to have learned that—not to

listen to me." He showed always an odd instinctive tenderness of her excessive sensibility.

"It's only because sometimes the things you say are so different from the things you are," she began, in what she felt was a very girlish strain—when the door opened and Mrs. Venable again came in, in that way of hers that seemed not so stealthy as substanceless. It was in such a way, Charlotte had thought, that a subtly thwarting spirit might haunt the studio—wearing that misleading air of quietness and blessing, yet warring insidiously against reason and continuity and peace.

The invader paused, with rather an elaborately patient air of guarding the conversational privileges of the two artists.

"Dear—it is a pity that people will interrupt so much at a time of day when they must know you are busy—but a Mr. Brodhead is here. I suppose I ought to know the name?"

"Brodhead!" the sculptor repeated with delighted emphasis. "Well, I should say so! Why, you know all about Brodhead, Alex! And you left him in the house? Why, there's no knowing what he's come to do for us! Alex dear—you must spill the children out of his lap; you must be as nice to him as you possibly can, and you must bring him right out here. Are you listening?"

But Mrs. Venable, having listened to good purpose, had already fled.

II

It was always like this in the studio. Something happened, or threatened to happen—which was quite as interrupting—at least once in fifteen minutes. How, during the year that Charlotte had been the sculptor's apprentice, she had learned so much, how Venable himself had wrought with such ample richness, seemed to her beyond explanation. It was true that he had lightly explained it only a moment before; he believed that he wrought from the pressure of necessity. But she had seen from the beginning that the man in him did not un-

derstand the artist—while at least a third of him, his surface self, was lovable, inconsequent child. And perhaps because he was so much a child—or was this, after all, mere gay deceit?—he did not suffer as much as she had always feared from the inescapable discomfort and unrest.

As for poor Charlotte herself, she suspected that the training imposed by the Venable household had been, so far as she herself was concerned, not without its advantages. Undoubtedly it was a training that tended toward negativity. But the girl had a suspicion that her own personality could afford a shade of suppression. It is not always considered charming, as she knew, and it is never considered discreet to be as spontaneous as she had been on her first approach to the studio, to think and speak and do with the utmost freedom always. So that in many ways she had had to learn better, or worse, according as you looked at it. She knew now, for instance, that it wasn't necessary to run to get little Christy Venable bread and butter just because he pressed that round, shiny, smiling face of his next hers and whispered in her ear that he was hungry and that there was no one else to get it for him. Mrs. Venable would unfailingly tell her the next day that Christy mustn't eat between meals. "As though," the scarlet-faced offender restrained herself from commenting, "the Venables *had* mealtimes!" Charlotte believed that she herself set no disproportionate value upon the symmetrical distribution of meals through the day; but it offended her sense of honesty to be obliged to assume, in talking with Mrs. Venable, that the latter's household was conducted on conventional principles.

Then one mustn't give advice when Mr. Venable asked it, because it was sure to involve one in domestic matters that weren't one's business. And one mustn't run in the house to find anything that he had lost because that implied that things were not kept in their places. And yet, need one conduct oneself as though Mrs. Venable were a shrew, when she was merely a charming,

rather too gently bred woman who had been oversensitive to hardships?

Alexandra never hurried, and for strangers whom she wished to please she had moreover her effectual arts; so that it was some time before the two workers in the studio heard again the sound of approaching voices. Charlotte started to withdraw into the smaller room, but the sculptor impatiently checked her, before he ran to greet with unaffected heartiness the tall, keen-eyed man who was following Alex.

"Brodhead! It's awfully kind of you to have hunted us out! What do you think of us? You can't say that's a bad little orchard out there!"

The newcomer gave his host a warm look, but declined the pastoral prospect. "My dear fellow," he laughed, "I've lived in the country myself—and the mud was as deep as yours. So I've spent my illusions. What I've come to see, Venable, is the place where your 'Democracy' was made." His eyes searched the room with unveiled eagerness.

But anything approaching the hero worshiping attitude on the part of his visitors Venable never appeared to perceive. "Then I'm sorry I have so little to show you," he said easily—"except Miss Bourne." And he introduced them. Then eagerly putting his arm through his friend's:

"And now you're here, Brodhead, you'll stay to luncheon and go in to town with us this afternoon. Alex—" he smiled whimsically at his wife—"was there to be luncheon?"

"Oh, we have no alternative today," Alexandra laughed, but her eyes took on a vague look and she wondered helplessly whether Duncan or Bob could possibly be found and sent to the grocer's for eggs or something. "It's Saturday, and the children are all at home and demand it. Mr. Brodhead, you will stay of course," she urged with gracious eagerness.

The visitor declined rather hastily. "You're both very kind," he said, "but, to tell the truth, I came out to persuade Venable to go back to town with me and lunch with me there. I should have

telephoned, but they told me, I believe, that your 'phone was out of order."

"Mark, dear, you promised you would see about it," Mrs. Venable interposed caressingly.

"So I decided that this way would be even better because then you couldn't escape me. It's rather important, Venable, really, J. T. DeWitt—you know who he is, the big railroad man—is waiting to meet you before he starts for the West this afternoon, and I thought we could easily get it in before the unveiling—"

"Yes, of course," the sculptor cheerfully agreed; but it was possible to detect that he was not overpleased.

"Just a moment—you haven't heard. It isn't that I'm scheming to fill up your time for you. And, Mrs. Venable, please don't go yet; this will interest you. Venable, if you want it, you've got the commission to make the big group that's to be placed outside the new Chicago theater. It's all settled, unofficially. DeWitt's advancing a good share of the money, and that's why he wants to meet you. I took it for granted that under those circumstances you would be willing to come."

"Me?" Venable frowned dubiously, as though unbelieving. "They've given that commission to me?"

"But that's a tremendous opportunity!" Charlotte Bourne, from her corner, cried out—and you realized that she always seemed to be waving banners aloft, to be treading on elevations, to be breathing a rarer air.

Mrs. Venable, although more contained, nevertheless allowed rather a dreadful look of savage hope to leap to her eyes. She was like a naturally gentle animal, kept too long on lean rations and made ferocious by the sight of food offered and then withdrawn. It was not an inborn cupidity that led her to seize first upon the rich kernel of gold in the new commission. But she had grown further and further away from the luxury of regarding Mark Venable's sculpture as art merely, or even as glory or as satisfied ambition. Her vision of her husband's work had become pretty persistently obscured, as the years crept

meagerly along, by the lively and exigent figures of her eight children. Ah, the children—they were real, needy, love compelling. But for the chilly bulks that stood about the studio she knew that she had almost a dislike.

"Oh, how did it—" she began rather faintly, because she felt that they expected her to say something.

"Why, because of this beautiful new statue of his, this 'Democracy.' We all think that's a very great thing, you know, Mrs. Venable, and these men want more of it."

"Extraordinary—extraordinary!" the sculptor repeated, looking up at his friend as a puzzled child might look at a wonderfully beneficent schoolmaster awarding an unexpected prize. The sincerity of his humbleness brought various tender, smiling looks to the faces of the others. The visitor laid his hand affectionately on the small man's shoulder.

"My dear fellow," he said in his deep, comfortable voice, "it's not extraordinary at all. The only amazing point is that you haven't half realized the size of your own work."

"Indeed, he hasn't, Mr. Brodhead," Charlotte Bourne agreed in a thrilled voice.

"And you'll have to take our word for it, Venable, if you can't see it yourself," Brodhead laughed. "For there are great things ahead of you now. A straight road—there's no doubt of it. Flood would have given his head to get this new commission, and so would Hollingsworth and Edgar."

The sculptor dropped his rare, unnatural seriousness and smiled toward his assistant as though they were successful accomplices in some particularly diabolical fraud. "A pretty neat thing for us to have pulled off, Miss Bourne!"

Charlotte was still radiant. "I am so glad, so happy!"

Mrs. Venable bent a gently flushed face toward her husband. "And you can consult with Lawrence about it, dear. He will want to do everything for you that he can."

"Lawrence?" Brodhead, with a quite natural feeling of proprietorship in his

sculptor, turned with quick interrogation.

It was Venable who hastily answered him. "My son. My eldest son. We believe he has a future as a sculptor."

"Oh, I see," Brodhead slowly assented.

"Our son has just returned from Paris." A new quality vibrated in Mrs. Venable's voice. "He has studied there for a long time, and we hope—"

"Oh, yes. He's following in his father's footsteps."

"Good Lord, not that!" Venable sharply caught up his visitor. "All that I am, you know, Brodhead, is a self-taught mechanic. What I have done has been done out of effrontery. Didn't know any better. So you may be sure we didn't repeat that with Lawrence. He knows things, that boy! And we do really believe that he has great gifts, that he'll startle us all some day. Now I, of course, seem a perfect old fogey to him, but he's too dutiful to say so."

"Oh, he exemplifies the newest fashions, then? All these young men are excessively Rodinesque, I suppose." Brodhead spoke courteously, yet without pretense of actual sympathy. "I should like to see your son's work," was his obvious afterthought.

"He's not started in yet," the mother began.

"Has no studio, you see," Venable threw in.

"Of course. There's nothing of his here, then?"

"Why, he has done one bit of modeling," Venable admitted. "Although I don't know what stage it's in now. Hullo, there he is, in the orchard! I'll ask him. Lawrence! Oh, Lawrence!"

The waiting group had the air of being held in positive suspense while a bareheaded youth sauntered in through the open door. He had a thin, rather keen face and wore glasses. There were suggestions of his mother's beauty in his open forehead and delicately molded chin.

The experienced patron of artists looked shrewdly at the newcomer. Well, there might be some foundation for his parents' rather touching belief. He

hadn't the exaggerated student pose; there might be a certain power in him. Intelligent head, at all events.

With perfect ease, and quite without deference, young Venable acknowledged the introduction to his father's friend and heard the news that he had brought. But Venable impatiently averted any further comment upon that matter.

"Lawrence," he said almost supplicatingly, laying his hand on the boy's shoulder, "Mr. Brodhead has asked to see some of your work. How about the 'Pan'? What have you done with it?"

"Oh, that's being cast. I finished it yesterday and let your Gioberti take charge of it."

Brodhead could not suppress the shadow of a smile. Lawrence had offered the commonplace explanation in a manner almost naively assured.

"Then you will allow me to see it later, I hope," Brodhead addressed the young man. "I am interested, profoundly so, in the work of all new sculptors. We need them here. We have a great deal to interpret. There's a vast opportunity in American sculpture."

"In sculpture always," young Venable conceded. "But to me there's almost a sentimental flavor, if that's not putting it too strongly, in the idea of American sculpture—"

He appeared not unwilling to elaborate this point, but the older man cut him short.

"At least," was the significant reminder, "I know that's not the sentiment you will bring to the unveiling this afternoon. There's American sculpture for you, at its high-water mark! Venable, if you can come with me now, I think it's time we started. My machine's waiting outside in the road; we'll get in in plenty of time for an early luncheon."

"In one moment." The sculptor hurried out of the room, and in an astonishingly short time returned with a pious, shrunken look, attributable, doubtless, to a black coat and cravat.

"Lawrence"—he gently drew his son aside—"I suppose you can't tell me where my overcoat is?"

"Your overcoat?" The boy smiled his detachment.

"Oh, of course you couldn't know. Miss Bourne, where do you suppose—I know I let the children take it yesterday— If you will wait an instant longer, Brodhead, I will run in the house again. Or perhaps I would best meet you outside. Miss Bourne, if the model turns up, engage him for Monday, please. And I shall see you all later in town."

III

CHARLOTTE BOURNE now and then looked up from the work to which, after the various departures from the studio, she had diligently applied herself, to address a bland observation to the young man who had lingered; and who disturbed her a little by moving restlessly about the room. But his answers, though civil enough, were short and absently framed. She wondered why he did not leave her, for he was silently charging the atmosphere with agitation. Moreover, the loyal disciple of Mark Venable felt it ungenerous of the newcomer to admit distractions of his own, whatever they might be, at the very moment when the pleasant rumble of his father's success was swelling through the leisurely air. How loud and triumphant and beautiful that success had sounded and was still sounding, in her own exulting ears! It was a moment, she felt, when, for the sculptor's son, at least, all lesser concerns should be merged in this supremely absorbing one. Resentment clouded her candid eyes and she ceased talking to her unencouraged visitor. Suddenly he turned toward her with rather an odd air of taking her understanding for granted, as a child turns with utter trustfulness to a friendly stranger. "Look out there, Miss Bourne." He nodded toward the orchard. "See how warm and still and sweet it is. Can you tell me why there isn't any rest and comfort in it? Wouldn't you suppose one could go out and lie under those trees and get some—some—tranquillity? But it's all a fallacy, that natural loveliness soothes. Why, it excites, it stimulates, it torments! It's like music. It demands detachment and a reverent approach."

Charlotte looked at him. "Are you thinking of trivial difficulties or real ones?" she asked bluntly—then added, half-withdrawingly, "Because you don't seem like the sort of person who has 'worries.'"

"I haven't," he laughed; "I have torments."

She considered. "Your mother and Mr. Venable positively shine with radiance, merely at your being here. I suppose that doesn't, that can't—"

The young man moved his shoulders impatiently. "Oh, I know, I know," he interrupted her. "But Miss Bourne, you know as well as I do that I'm a child to them. The dear things have done all they can to foster the artist in me, but it's natural, I suppose, that they should forget that the artist is full grown and the child has disappeared. They don't understand—even my father doesn't—the torture of inaction, now that I'm ready to begin. *That's* what is ailing me now."

Charlotte Bourne was one of those women who carry about with them the curious spell of the confessional. Natures less tranquil and more self-conscious surrendered their secret histories at the mere sight of her. The cadences of passionate confidence were as familiar to her as the sound of the wind. Gently and without surprise she smiled at Lawrence Venable. "Ah, that! But it's the old, old ailment of youth, isn't it?"

"Then are you suffering from it, too?" he eagerly demanded.

She hesitated. "A woman's youth is different. She has, even when she's an artist, more patience to await the outcome. The tedious processes of creation are perhaps more congenial to her. At least, that's what I've imagined. I'm not really speaking of myself. I'm not very much of an artist, you know. I'm very far from being one of the authentic, the anointed, as you are."

There was a little silence. Then Charlotte looked up and saw a faint smile on the young man's face. "I don't know you very well," he said, with a younger and therefore more engaging manner than she had hitherto observed in him.

"I don't know whether you expected me to challenge that remark of yours."

"I never say things with that intention. I was simply repeating, accepting, what your father has often told me."

"Oh, I see. I thought you might be trying to discover whether I took myself seriously. And I had to settle all that, of course, a long time ago."

"Naturally, at the beginning."

"It's such a terribly crucial, even sacred thing," he went on, "one's—what shall I say?—one's mainspring of action. One can't give up all one's life and strength to an art without a most intense belief, not only in the art, but in oneself. Or rather, something that's more than belief—knowledge."

"It often happens that one *does* have to work without any such tremendous fortification," she quietly reminded him. "If you have it, you're so divinely fortunate that I don't see how you can be miserable."

He looked at her with a kind of jealous eagerness. "One can never be so sure," he said, "that one doesn't want to be a thousand times surer. The knowledge that every action of one's life is based on has got to be a mighty unquestionable knowledge."

She paused, realizing that he invited reassurance, but unable to supply the food for which his lusty egotism hungered. "What impresses me very much," she said at last, with entire sincerity, "is that your rather unusual attitude is one that must immensely please your father. He could not bear to have you a self-distrustful dilettante."

"That's very true," he calmly agreed. Had nothing ever wounded him? For as he spoke he seemed to the girl to reveal surface after surface that was like lustrous, unscratched metal. "Theoretically my father and I are in very real agreement. It's tacit, of course. We couldn't discuss it—at least, we never have. And it's impersonal, fortunately. Or we couldn't live it."

"I scarcely understand."

"Don't you? But you say that father has often talked with you about me. I thought he must have spoken of the as-

sumption that I am sure that he and I both have. As to the artistic relationship, I mean, between himself and me. Do you remember that he has?"

"Are you sure you're not referring to something that I really oughtn't to know?" Charlotte scrupulously protested.

"You do know," he insisted. "You do understand. That's why I am talking to you." He stopped a moment and looked at her curiously. "It's rather odd, too. Because, often as I've thought of it, I'm sure I've never put the thing into words before. And I really don't know how—Miss Bourne, you must have thought a great deal, as we all do, about the artistic faculty, how oddly it appears, is transmitted, decays and so on? I suppose you have your theories about it?"

Charlotte was conscious of a cautious unwillingness to surrender to any premises that this obstreperous logician might present. "My thoughts about it have been entirely ordinary," she smiled. And I'm thoroughly ignorant of the scientific aspect of it. So—"

"Oh, well, I won't go into it. I'll simply remind you of what everybody knows—you can think of a hundred instances—that a pronounced artistic faculty is almost sure to be inherited. And that it's never inherited in duplicate measure. A man in whom there reappears his father's gift has it in much greater degree, or much less. The thing seems to go in curves; I wish it could be accurately plotted out."

Charlotte Bourne had stopped working and stood leaning over the back of a chair. She had divined what the young man wished to say. She waited to see whether he had the courage to say it. But he was looking away from her, apparently intent only upon his exposition.

"You know quite well how it is. The strange thing, the divine seed, often sleeps for several generations, quite unsuspected. Then suddenly it appears, in a personality you can't account for. It may be that the man is really great, an artist of the first rank. In which case he can't outdo himself; nature won't allow

it. And his son will inherit a diluted faculty that will be merely a curse to himself and of no use to anybody else. Or, which is really more likely, the seed has blossomed in a man who's of second rank, or third—a man like—well, like my father. And in that case there's a chance, there's the greatest chance, for the son. Do you understand?" He turned to her a face that was hotly flushed.

"Perfectly."

"But what is it that you are thinking?"

"Why should you care what I think?"

"That's quite true. Why should I care? But I do. Will you tell me?"

"If you insist"—her voice trembled a little—"I think the implications of what you have said are intolerable."

"Then you have a woman's timidity." He tried to pique her. "You are unwilling to look at things directly."

"Forgive me—I scarcely know you—but I know that I do look directly at your father and his work," her unswerving loyalty prompted her to falter.

"Oh, but aren't you giving the thing a personal tinge? I was merely presenting a diagram."

"Then I beg of you not to show me any others." Her face and throat were all aflame; her heart beat high with the thought of Mark Venable's unacknowledged greatness.

Lawrence looked hard at the girl for a moment. She was again furiously at work and seemed not longer to be conscious that he was with her. But the feeling that she had shown, although he had not fully understood it, had nevertheless oddly stirred him. One might have known, from her clear eyes and sensitive mouth, that she would be like this—a being all innocent ardors and flaming loyalties. He was glad that he had roused her, though for the moment he had forgotten how he had happened to. What had he, after all, been talking of? And how effectually he had been distracted! He walked over to the open door and stood a moment considering. Then he came back and joined Charlotte. "Miss Bourne."

She answered him without looking up.

"I see that I didn't convince you—that you don't believe in me. But perhaps for that very reason you will be willing to do something for me. Will you?"

Charlotte forced an air of patience with this singularly disturbing youth. "Why, if it is possible."

"I should like to say it plainly, but I'm afraid of you." He looked at her whimsically. "It is this: You see how I'm placed at present. No chance to get to work, yet with unlimited leisure. And it would be a perfect godsend to me to stay about with you and talk to you, if—"

"But you know you're quite at liberty to. Why do you ask me that?" She smiled.

"Shall I tell you why? Because I'm afraid of liking you too much—of making love to you. No—let me go on. That is what I should like to do. But I never do what I like, and I don't mean to in this case. But I don't need to tell you that if one is a man one can never be absolutely sure of oneself. So what I wanted to ask you is—if you find me headed toward the perilous path, to stop me. Will you?"

Charlotte always moved and spoke with unusual slowness. Before her astonishment and annoyance had found words, these had been halted by the oddly eager and solicitous look on the young man's face. Something in his naïve manner of asking her so utterly preposterous a question suddenly gave her the poignant experience of feeling æons older than the man before her. A sense of motherhood, of which not he alone but all other men and children were the delicious objects, swelled divinely in her. In a moment the wide warmth of it had ebbed again, but it left her gentle toward him. And when she spoke she even smiled.

"I almost think," she said, "that I could have brought myself to snub you, without your express invitation. But since you're so astonishingly outspoken, I'm tempted to ask you, before we drop the subject, what your meaning really is. I'm sure you are quite able to see that it's no pastime of mine to spread snares.

So I admit I'm a little curious to know why you should be afraid of me—why in the world it should occur to you to ask me to defend you against a person so absorbed in her own pursuits, so frankly—undesigning!”

“Oh, Miss Bourne—if you were any other woman in the world I should think that you wanted me to tell you that you are enchanting! And you are. Oughtn't I to have said that? You know you didn't mind. And the reason I'm not going to allow myself to tell you so all the time is—but you remember what I've just been saying to you about my work. It isn't for me to dally with delightful things. My path is too narrow. My energy is too unspeakably precious. Always I am resisting, resisting, resisting. I've been doing it already for years, though my work seems not really to have begun. I must deny my strength and my life to every purpose except the one appointed one. The pleasant things that are innocent enough for other men are not for me. Surely you will admit that?”

“It may be best for an artist to take that view,” she seriously conceded. “Much of the time I agree with it. And yet—I'm rather more familiar with your father's course than with that of any other artist. Have you thought of what *his* life has been?”

“I know—I know. Energy sacrificed and squandered—but I see what he is.”

“I wonder if you do—yet?”

“I see. You think I undervalue him. At all events, he's the most wonderfully dear fellow in the world; there's no doubt of that. He deserves far more than I deserve. I almost wish— What has happened?”

Charlotte had suddenly stopped work, put aside her tools and hurriedly slipped into her coat.

“Nothing, except that our train into town leaves in three-quarters of an hour.”

“Oh, Lord!” Lawrence groaned. “What a bore ceremonies are! Poor, dear daddy, I do pity him! Must I really go? Oh, Miss Bourne, please don't look at me like that,” he pleaded, laughing. “I never dreamed of not going—I really didn't. May I call for you?”

“No,” she said uncompromisingly, “I shall see you at the station, on the train—somewhere. But, Mr. Lawrence!” She turned as she reached the doorway and faced him. “I beg of you, do come with your mind open. You're going to see a very wonderful thing. I wish I could be sure that you will see it as it is.”

The words echoed by no means reassuringly in his mind, but before he could answer she was gone.

IV

WITH exquisite deliberation the long, still, radiant afternoon unfolded itself. It was as though the season had reached its climax, and having spent itself in the delicious effort, surrendered to a necessary pause. Coincidentally a singular lull seemed to have occurred in the affairs of the Venable household. Except for an occasional clump and rattle in the kitchen, there was not a sound to be heard upon the place; for the younger Venables had marched off in a body turtle hunting, a sport that notoriously combines the maximum of interest with the minimum of danger. The interest depends, of course, upon your knowledge that there is a kind of turtle that will snap at you and bite you and in fact eat you entirely up, as you carefully explain to your associates. But you yourself, although highly relishing the danger that you incur, are nevertheless wise enough to recognize this voracious monster and avoid him, limiting your prey to the harmless spotted back that appears in the marshy place behind the house in spring, and that on pleasant half-holidays so loves to venture outside his damp retreat and sun himself on a stone, trusting, as likely as not, that he will be able to escape you. But you know his ways too well and your tread is too quick and stealthy, and before he even suspects that you are near you have stretched out your invincible arm and seized him; whereupon, after an investigation of his reticent personality, you carelessly drop him in your pocket and look out for the next one.

Such, at least, was more or less the frame of mind of Duncan Venable, who, accompanied by his brothers Bob and Christy, and also, as a particular privilege to her, by his infant sister Jane, succeeded in capturing a magnificent total of two turtles and returned with these to the house. Until the mysterious beasts should become tamed and permanently attached to the family by ties of affection, Duncan declared it necessary to confine them by force. He therefore undertook, single-handed, the others meanwhile giving his performance their concentrated attention, to mend a broken chicken coop, intending subsequently to make this fast to the ground. In the interval of reconstruction, the guardianship of the turtles was intrusted to Marcia, who, because she wasn't well, was sitting wrapped in shawls on the back porch, quite definitely realizing the distinction that her semi-illness conferred. Mrs. Venable, who sat near by, had abandoned the stocking basket to which twenty-five years of domesticity had not yet reconciled her, in the interests of a white lawn frock for Jane. Jane was so much smaller than the others that this task had been begun on the pleasant theory that it would for that reason be a simple matter to accomplish, but the chubby little girl's very definite outlines were rapidly outgrowing the still rather vague proportions of the garment. Alexandra had sometimes wondered, with perhaps a rather scornful seriousness, how the offspring of more Philistine families could always be massed together and sent forth in a glittering cohort of respectability as often as social occasion demanded. David was putting himself through college and Emily was sent to boarding school by a well-to-do uncle, so that their clothing problems, after the convulsive agonies of vacation times, hadn't daily to be faced. But the younger Venables had early accepted it as a fundamental law of family life that when Marcia's outer raiment held together Jane's didn't; and when Bob had a clean white suit, the other boys' wardrobes seemed to produce nothing but faded rompers. So far in their history not more than two of

them had ever been conjointly "dressed up," and the older they grew and the larger the clothes they needed, the less likelihood there seemed that this desirable consummation ever would be attained.

But these humiliating perplexities remained quite outside their mother's consciousness this golden afternoon. Her thread knotted and her work fell in her lap, for enticements for her eyes were everywhere too potent. She loved to watch her children's straight backs and lithe movements and to overhear their naive conversations. And over along the edge of the marsh where the turtles had been found, a fringe of willows stood delicate and breathless in the still air. Their effect was so illusory, so much lovelier than the realities of intenser seasons, that it would scarcely have been surprising to glance a moment later and find that they were gone. And the air was filled with sweet, haunting scents whose origin one might vainly exhaust oneself in tracing. It was a day of wonders. Alexandra believed it was the sunshine and the budding apple trees that gave her so rare and rapturous a feeling of content. The knowledge of financial relief that the new commission had brought had all day been busy leavening her consciousness; but for the time she had forgotten from what source her peace had sprung. Her preoccupations were so constantly and intensely maternal that she no longer thought of Mark and his good fortune—though the good fortune was one to which, in an unprecedented degree, his family would share. But she was deeply conscious that she was standing within the inmost veils of spring; that the children had never seemed so adorable; and that Lawrence, best beloved among them, was again within reach of her bosom's tenderness.

At about six the children declared their hunger and made an extraordinary concerted attack upon the milk supply. A precocious sense of equity develops in families where there are many children and scant supervision; and the young Venables' partition of their simple rations was usually accomplished with

scrupulous consideration of the smaller and grave justice toward the more well-grown members; so that, on the whole, there was infrequent occasion for dispute. Left alone for a moment, Mrs. Venable stood on the steps of the porch watching the first faint deepening of the evening sky. It could therefore scarcely escape her notice that Charlotte Bourne, alone, should turn in at the outer gate and hurry toward the studio entrance—an action, that in view of the day and hour, by all means demanded explanation. For as to whatever went on in that quarter of the establishment she had always an oddly alert and suspicious sense. Turning quickly, she flew through the house and opened one door of the studio at the same time that Charlotte, obviously hesitating and ill at ease, appeared at the other.

As they faced each other, Alexandra characteristically remained silent, giving the girl's entrance the color of an intrusion. Charlotte perceived this, paused, recovered herself and inquired with easy dignity:

"Have you heard about the unveiling, Mrs. Venable? You would have been immensely proud," she went on, unable even before this chilling audience, to subdue her enthusiasm. "It went beyond everything that we hoped. And there was a most wonderful spirit of homage there, a true, honest appreciation of him—at last! Oh, you have reason to be very happy! Mr. Venable, I imagine, won't be home for some time. He was so thickly surrounded, we could scarcely get near him for a word."

Mrs. Venable stood stark and unyielding in the doorway. "And Lawrence?" she demanded, with a tinge of accusation in her voice.

Charlotte considered for an instant. "Unfortunately, he has a very bad headache—"

"Where is he?" The question flew like an arrow.

Again the girl hesitated. Her nature's deep need of truth telling had caused her embarrassing moments before this.

"We came out from town together," she said slowly. "I came here, in fact, on an errand from him. He is feeling so

exhausted that he said he must be alone, he couldn't have the children about. So I hurried ahead to see if the studio were vacant so that he might come here and rest a little. He is waiting for me."

The burden of the ungracious errand was all Charlotte's, of course. Mrs. Venable bent toward her with an air of excessive restraint.

"My dear Miss Bourne, you realize, of course, that my son can be alone if he wishes—and that he can have all the care that he needs. But he scarcely meant, I imagine, that he wished to exclude his mother. I must see what condition he is in. Where shall I find him?"

"Forgive me, Mrs. Venable, but I really think it would be better for him to be quite alone for a little."

"Are you withholding something? Has there been an accident?"

The door leading to the house was noisily swung open; a child's feet clattered through, and Christy's voice shrill with innocence, feverishly invoked his mother's intervention.

"One of the turtles is loose," he narrated, "and it isn't Marcia's fault, is it, because she is sick, but Duncan says it is, and he is very cross with her, and the turtle house is all done, and there is only one turtle, and *won't* you come and see?"

Charlotte saw only one course, although it left her an apparent traitor to her late companion. "If you will allow me to go with Christy and straighten out the children's difficulties, Mrs. Venable," she suggested calmly, "you will find your son outside by the gate. I can assure you that he is not hurt. There has been no disaster." And grasping the child's hand, she followed his eager lead.

An apathetic figure that scarcely seemed to be her boy's met Alexandra at the outer gate, and a dulled, smitten face responded to her solicitude. Only this morning he had been restless because there was no outlet for his energy. And now the languor of illness was upon him. Alexandra at that moment would have been more than human if she had forborne to urge, to insist, to caress. Without resisting her, the boy merely repeated over and over that his head

ached, as though he had supposed that formula would suffice. She drew him inside the studio, persuaded him to lie down and started to go to prepare tea for him—when she halted in delighted recollection.

"Oh, but there is something you must see first, dear!" she exclaimed. "Gioberti has brought back your 'Pan'! I do so hope you will think he has done it well. It is such a beautiful thing, Lawrence. See, here it is!" She took the small plaster figure from a shelf and held it up for him to see.

With a short, harsh sound of protest, Lawrence rose and walked toward the door. "Not now, mother," he managed to say as he stumbled outside. "It's too—too stuffy in here now. I'm only going out to watch the sunset."

For a moment the mother stood hurt and bewildered. The proud arm that had been holding the "Pan" aloft like a torch was slowly lowered; Alexandra set the figure on a crowded table. Then she crept to the doorway, and with the stealth of affection secretly watched Lawrence make his slow way to the top of the hillside and sit there, his body, indeed, turned toward the primrose-colored west, but his face bent toward the ground. How imperfectly, after all, she knew her boy, now that he was become a man! Formerly he had never been ungracious and moody when he was ill. And it had always been his instinct, whatever afflicted him, to turn first to her. Was the precious cord between them snapped, and the old deep sweetness lost? No, it must be only that a strange new manhood was speaking in Lawrence, that it must be her patient part to divine and understand, and having divined, to court and woo and soothe and beset with ministrations.

Over and over again, she almost yielded to the desire to follow him. As she wavered, an automobile sounded at the gate, and Mark Venable's small figure, accompanied by two taller ones, which proved to be those of Brodhead and Sprague, another sculptor, came rapidly along the narrow walk. Without the stimulus of the strangers' presence, Alexandra might have found it

difficult to force herself to the effort of warmly welcoming her husband, for she was obsessed by Lawrence's suffering and eager to be with him. Then—she had long lost the old enthusiasm that her husband still innocently expected her to display. She was even afraid that some day she should tell him how it was: that she was infinitely tired of sculpture. She wasn't, she admitted, of the mold of saints and heroes. And the cold art had come to seem like a god to her, to whom, year after year, one makes constant sacrifice of all that one has, and from whom, after all, one receives favor so capricious and scant that one fears, detests, disbelieves—and cloaks one's infidelity.

But she nevertheless found herself able to greet the trio with gay cordiality, and to usher them hospitably into the dusk-filled studio. The eager questions that they looked for came with long accustomed smoothness to her lips. But the answers sounded with a heartiness and assurance that were less familiar to her. It had been a day of triumph, they chorused. Through Venable's evident fatigue there shone a positive radiance. As soon as they were inside he came up to his wife and laid his hand upon her arm.

"Dear Alex," he said, with an earnestness that she scarcely knew in him, "if you had been there this would have been the best day of our lives. It wasn't merely that people said pleasant things—there was a new atmosphere. I believe I've gotten ahead a little. And the best of it is, I'm full of new ideas. I wish there were ten of me, so that I could get them all worked out at once. Where's Miss Bourne?" He looked about him with subdued excitement. "Where's Lawrence? What did Lawrence think?" The last question he asked with confidence; it was as if the day had brought him deep refreshment.

"Oh, he came home full of praise and of pride in you," the mother testified, without a second's hesitation. "He wants so much to talk to you. He has only gone outside for a little."

"Good! He thinks I've hit it off, then! And only this morning I felt afraid of him."

"Venable's success is easy to understand," observed Sprague from the other end of the room. "He's always had such a ripping model! Mrs. Venable, you *did* sit for this, didn't you?"—indicating a plaster replica of one of Venable's earlier compositions.

"Oh"—she bent forward, smiling, to peer through the shadows—"for *that* I did. Mark used to model me a little, years ago. But I've quite outlived my usefulness. The later figures—and 'Democracy,' in particular—have been, I think, suggested by Miss Bourne. Haven't they, Mark, dear?"

"Why, Alex, you know quite well who the model was. The same one I've had for the last half-dozen years. But these long sufferers haven't come to talk shop. I only bribed them to leave the car at all by telling them about that precious port of ours that we've been hoarding so long. Can you tell me where it is, dear?"

"Let me get it, instead." She met the suggestion eagerly. "And Mark, while I'm gone, please light some of your lamps. It's already dark."

It was only a few moments before she returned, bearing her agreeably laden silver tray as though it were less a burden than an opportunity to exercise her characteristic grace. With inspired discretion the dim yellow light caressed her small dark head, broad-browed face and the long outlines of her figure. The three men paused suddenly in their talk and looked at her in silent admiration, a sentiment that she was always quick to detect and to which she made gay and gracious response. Her husband, exulting in the lovely fashion in which she had flowered for them, touched her hair with his lips as he passed her and whispered a lover's syllable.

"I should say of this wine," Brodhead remarked, after gravely tasting it, "that it was almost—perhaps quite—worthy to be drunk in connection with the name of a great sculptor and a perfect work of art." He raised his glass toward Venable.

"Oh, I've had more than my share of kindness for today." Venable laughingly acknowledged his friend's toast. "Here comes the boy!"

"Brodhead, you know we really must get back to town," his companion urged.

But before the little group had moved, or lost its appearance of gaiety, Lawrence Venable was inside the room.

"Come, old man, we've been waiting for you!" his father heartily called out.

There was a moment's silence and constraint. Then Lawrence ceremoniously came forward. But his almost extravagantly phrased congratulations to his father had a forced note; one who had not noted his habitual confident and airy manner would have supposed him shy. The flavor of conviviality was spent at his coming, and the guests rose to take their leave.

"One moment more," Venable pleaded, his hand on the boy's shoulder. "One more glass before you go. To my son, the coming sculptor, who will some day outstrip all of us! To his high success!"

The strangers were punctiliously courteous. But there was an effect of the glass being drunk with unsmiling haste, almost as though it were a bitter draught. And as the men hurried into their coats and said their good nights, Lawrence stood grave and taciturn. Once or twice Alexandra had looked eagerly in the direction of the "Pan," which stood in the shadow. But something that she did not understand forbade her speaking of it. The boy was shattered, she remembered, by his day's fatigue. For this weary hour he was scarcely theirs at all. But tomorrow they would reclaim him. And, thank heaven, there would be numberless to-morrows.

V

ALEXANDRA, still insistently solicitous, would have borne her boy away with her; but Lawrence had roused himself in a manner that mystified and dimly frightened her no less than his collapse. There was nothing to do but allow him to remain, but the baffled mother's eyes clung searchingly to her son's figure as she stood hesitating in the doorway.

"Let us have fifteen minutes, dear." The sculptor was still in exuberantly

high spirits. "I'll see, a little later, that you get a chance to put this baby of yours to bed. And then perhaps my turn will come, for I want to talk with you. But I must have my pipe first, and I want some of that criticism the boy has been holding back. Give it to me as hard as you can, Lawrence. Things have gone too well with me today. Another day of it would spoil me. I need a reaction. You won't smoke, I suppose?" Alexandra had disappeared.

"I never do, thank you." Lawrence was moving uneasily about. "No good reason for it—just one of the things I gave up."

In the boy's feverish mood nothing about him seemed familiar and natural. He was like an unprepared-for guest among inexplicable aliens. Curiously, as at an utter stranger, he looked at the little man who had already fitted himself into the seat of a big chair, rested his feet on a near-by bench and begun cheerfully to puff at a short pipe. Why should it be so difficult to contemplate calmly his father's bland negligence and ease?

"Well?" Mark asked unworriedly.

"I've got to know," the boy demanded, almost sharply, "how you ever learned to do it."

"Tell me what's wrong with it," came comfortably through the thickening smoke.

Lawrence made an impatient gesture. "Why, I can't pull that sort of work to pieces. Nobody could. You must know that yourself. It's *right*; it has the inevitable air; it's a masterpiece. And, thank God, I'm able to see that it is."

"H'm." Venable took his pipe from his mouth and leaned forward. "You think it's the best I've done, then?"

"Oh, I don't know all you've done. But it's better than anything anybody else can do. Why, father, it's tremendous! It's stunned me. I'm—oh, well, I'm sick from it!"

"Upon my word, Lawrence"—the sculptor broke into his low, comfortable laugh—"you *are* like your mother! If you're honest with me about this, and I know you are, I'm delighted—but let's not take it quite so hard. If I've really

done a decent thing, why shouldn't we have a good time over it? Good excuses for hilarity don't come our way too often, do they?"

Lawrence sat silent, looking at the small, shaggy man with piercing eagerness, as though to wrench from him his precious secret of beauty and achievement.

"But Lord, how I've fooled you!" Venable grew more serious. "If you and the others think 'Democracy' is good, that's only because you can't see inside my head. If you only knew what I can do, what I will do! Lawrence, I'll show you yet! I'm not an old man, and I seem suddenly able to see ahead with the most amazing clearness. Life's a pretty good thing, boy, isn't it?"

"If you have it in you to *do*, it's good—it's divine; otherwise it's intolerable."

"Something wrong, Lawrence?" The soft voice veiled somewhat a sudden, imperative concern.

"I feel rather nervous, that's all. But don't bother about my fidgets, father. This is a gala day for you; it's abominable for me to spoil it." Again he looked at his father with the same searching intensity. "But I can tell you," he added, "that you'll have plenty more such days. You're secure now, if a man ever was!"

For the first time since they had met that evening, Venable watched his son with keen attention. "Oh, I see," he drawled, with a certain tender shrewdness, then during a silent moment puffed at his pipe. "Well," he said at last, with slow significance, "you have praised me far too much. But even if all you've said of me were true, and more, there are none too many sculptors in the world, my boy. They don't exactly—crowd each other."

The boy's voice choked, and he burst out: "Father, you think me ungenerous—and I am! You think I grudge you your success—and I do! You deserve it a thousand times more than I do—but can't you see what it means for me?"

"Why for you?"

"It's as if we were on opposite ends of a balance. If one of us is up, the other is down. I'm glad you're up, and you

belong there. But after I've fed on delusions all my life it's not easy to be down where delusions aren't."

Venable frowned. "You've got some idea that isn't clear to me," he said kindly. "Let's talk it out. That's the only thing to do. We have the night ahead of us. Now take your time and tell me. If there's any man with whom you ought to be able to speak freely and intimately, it's I." His voice held inimitable tenderness. "I shall understand; be sure of that. I know you, boy. You're my own bone and sinew—"

"God, it's just that!" Lawrence broke in harshly, but so low that his father scarcely caught the words.

"Tell me plainly, Lawrence," Venable insisted. "You mean because we—"

"You've said it. We're one bone and sinew. Only one of us can count. I don't know that we've ever put it into so many words, but I've always taken it for granted that you believed it, too. The son of a true artist never does count, you know as well as I. He can only be the aftermath. We were speaking of it this morning, Miss Bourne and I. I was dancing on my fool's peak, as usual." He spoke bitterly. "*And she knew then!* What an unspeakable thing for a man to remember! She's quite capable of perceiving all the ways in which one is a deluded ass, isn't she? And she has such a pleasant fashion of utterly despising one!"

"Go slow, Lawrence. We're going to clear this up, you know." The father's voice was extremely gentle. "You say you've always believed there was a future for you because there didn't seem to be very much for me. Well, so far as I can see, the future's still pretty nebulous for both of us. There's my drudgery to balance against your own remarkable gift. You've got to strain your fantastic theory pretty far, haven't you, to do away with the facts—or to convert my virtuous endeavors to support this hungry family into a handicap for you!"

"You'll have to face it, father," the boy dismally persisted. "We're both coveting a prize that can't come to two men of the same blood. No man who is

the supreme artist you have shown yourself to be can transmit his gift to his son—that's my only point. Why, don't you see that if he could, he would be twice mortal, he would be a god—to be great himself and pass on greatness to another! After all, father, you're only human."

"My dear boy"—the sculptor spoke still soothingly, but evidently with entire honesty—"are you still young enough to imagine that art is made of miracles? I wish you could know what a tremendous duffer I was when I began—when I married your mother—when you were born. If you could know how the three of us floundered, you and she and I! We were all at about the same stage then of practical knowledge, of adaptedness to life. Oh, it may be that you were a *little* ahead of the others of us! You always had such an air of precocious wisdom that your mother and I have never quite caught up with you."

He paused and looked at his son with reminiscent affection. Lawrence mustered a wan smile.

"But what I wanted to tell you was that my clay isn't any readier at shaping itself than it was then. It waits just as long for me to direct it as it ever did. No, what I've done, I've *sweated out* of myself, then and now. You've merely got to make up your mind to do the same."

Lawrence shook his head. "That's just it," he said hopelessly. "You do work, you do sweat, and you aren't eternally fussing about the theory of it. Why couldn't I have known I was far too self-conscious a type ever to amount to anything as an artist? I half suspect a true artist ought to have the simplicity of a child. And, father, I believe you have it. Well, I haven't. And there we are."

"But, my dear boy, you're not getting an inch away from your obsession," his father gently reminded him. "You're still theorizing, still beating the air. Now I don't care anything for theories. I can't talk esthetics—I never could. In fact, I haven't any mental processes worth speaking of. I could talk to you

better if we had something tangible here—well, if that 'Pan' of yours had come back. I could show you, perhaps."

"It has, father. It's directly behind you." The young man spoke with rather an ominous calmness.

"Good! That's what we're after. Now let's have a look at it. If, at your age, I could have done half as much— Ah, I see! By Jove, there's nothing so effective for sculpture as this artificial light. Just see these shadows—"

Mark Venable reached for a square block of wood and upon this, as a base, placed the figure of the "Pan." Lawrence, silent, motionless, with tightened lips and brilliant eyes, jealously watched his father's slightest movement. It was as though this were his last desperate chance; as though he were mutely challenging the proven artist to place on him, if he could, if he dared, the stamp of authenticity. For perhaps, after all, he might himself be wrong. He had been so dazed, so stricken, a few hours back. And since then the paths of his conjecture had been dark, confusing; he might have wandered hideously astray. That precious strength that he believed was gone might have teased and tricked him merely. Well, here was a judge with every prejudice in his favor, a judge who had sacrificed for him, hoped for him, loved him, but above all a judge who knew, who was himself a master. If there was reassurance, let it come from him.

But the master delayed. Intolerably the moments dragged, while Venable ducked his head, twisted his small, agile body and walked peeringly about the plaster figure, surveying it first closely and then from an appraising distance. Still he said nothing.

Ah, why didn't he speak? Had he found nothing, *nothing*? If the essential word could honestly be spoken, he would have been loud and eager to proclaim it. No; there was no hope. The thing was worthless, of course, hollow, spurious, dead. The considerate judge was merely fencing for time. It was not in his heart to deal the blow that he must deal.

"In God's name, father, why should

we pretend?" The boy sprang from his chair and stood trembling. "It's all over with me. We both know it. Don't torture me by looking at that dead thing there. It's horror enough to know that I made it and that it's the best I could do. Speak to me—tell me so—don't lie to me!" The last words came with an almost hysterical cry of appeal.

Venable turned quickly. "Dear boy, we'll put off our shop talk till tomorrow." He spoke rapidly and determinedly. "I was foolish to keep you up tonight. Your mother knew what was best for you. This is an enormously clever study of yours. You should be proud of it. We'll talk more about it tomorrow when you're rested, when we're both rested."

"All right, daddy," Lawrence spoke in a softer voice, but his tense, trembling figure did not yield. "We'll put it off. It's late, I know. But there's one thing I must do tonight—that I can't put off. I'm done with sculpture and with plodding mediocrity. This is the end of it." With quick, passionate gestures, he seized a heavy mallet that lay near him and struck the "Pan" a sharp, violent blow that sent it in fragments to the floor. Before Venable could arrest the movement of that impetuous arm, the splintered plaster had already flown and the crash had sounded.

For the merest flash of time Lawrence felt immeasurable relief. His despair had culminated in ecstasy. He had freed himself from torment.

Then his vision, clouded as it had been with maddening, nightmarish forms, was suddenly constrained to meet a nearer and concrete horror. Mark Venable had sunk into a chair and was holding both hands to—was it his cheek—or—And his bearded face showed pallid, even in the lamplight. And blood was flowing.

"Daddy, you are hurt!"

"Nonsense; I think not," Venable faintly protested. "Or only for the moment, that is. Help me to wash it out, will you? Or wait; perhaps we'd better be a little more scientific about it. Just run down the street and ask the doctor to come, will you, Lawrence?"

"It's your—eye?" Lawrence forced himself to ask.

"Yes. The pain's rather bad. Don't let your mother know. Help me to lie down—that's it. I'm all right. You know, Lawrence. Third house on the left. The telephone's out of—"

"I must know what is broken. We heard *such* a crash!" Alexandra opened the door as she spoke.

"I was careless enough to drop Lawrence's 'Pan.' But you shall have another, Alex, all your own. Don't wait now, dear, please. Lawrence is just going."

"Are you very tired, Mark?" She pressed on into the room, drawn she knew not why. "Oh, my dear, you're hurt!"

"Mother!" Lawrence seized her by the arm and checked her. "Can you keep calm? *Will* you? He is hurt a little. But don't get frightened. Just stay with him until I get back. I'm after the doctor." And he ran swiftly out and down the path that led to the street.

An hour later the normal silence of night was altered to a stealthy hospital hush. Venable was in bed, bandaged and drugged. Alexandra, herself heroically alert and competent in a sick room, was making unwilling and jealous arrangements for the nurse who was scheduled to arrive on the next train. Frightened faces of nightgowned children met in tiptoed encounters and exchanged surmises. They were willing to keep silent, but it seemed as if they might be told a little more. It hadn't been nearly as bad as this when Jane was born, and that had been sufficiently mysterious and horrid. If they might only be allowed to *do* something! Of all that household, Lawrence was the only one who did not long to be in Venable's chamber, to stay near his bedside, to do for him. As the wretched boy crept by the door, the very atmosphere of his father's room seemed to accuse him. Uncouth shapes, with wise, malicious eyes and pointing fingers, seemed to swarm there. Ah, *they* knew who had destroyed Mark Venable!

But it was nevertheless he who found

courage to insist upon the consultation of specialists; and this long before he could bring himself—as he finally did, waylaying the doctor in the dark hall, full of shadows and whispers—to put the momentous and terrible question: Would Mark Venable be blind?

"Why, I hope not," the doctor answered uneasily. "You can understand that I'd rather not give you any opinion tonight. And the other doctors will be here shortly. You can be sure we'll do our best to prevent it."

The night was interminable and horror-laden.

VI

On the morning after the unveiling Charlotte Bourne, whose temporary home was with an elderly couple living a quarter of a mile away, delayed her return to the studio. It was Sunday, and she recalled, with the smile that she always had for his *naïvetés*, Mark Venable's honest belief that he did not work on that day—models being unreliable and workmen beyond reach altogether and a day's respite, as he had enthusiastically set forth to her, being wholesome in any case. This meant, she had learned, that after the family breakfast on Sunday morning his boys felt at liberty to fall upon their most cherished playmate and coax him to play jungle, a pastime so engrossing and congenial that Venable often resisted the lure of his studio for as much as an hour. But by ten o'clock you were sure to find him there, always with a new and entirely reasonable pretext for having sacrificed his holiday. Charlotte loved always to draw these explanations from him. It was continually a joy to her to join as far as she could in the game that Venable made of living, in those innocent pretenses in which, like his own children, he himself more than half believed. But the girl was an idolater, in the fashion of all youthful artists toward their chosen master.

Today, nevertheless, if she could have reconciled her exacting conscience with truancy, she would have delayed going altogether. Her imagination even dal-

lied with possibilities that the day previous she could scarcely have borne picturing. She wondered whether Mark Venable really needed her help as much as he always generously affected, and whether, inasmuch as she had failed so utterly in adapting herself to the excessively personal atmosphere of the Venable establishment, she ought not for a time to withdraw from it altogether. Mrs. Venable's attitude wasn't, of course, of recent origin, but the evening before had almost intolerably defined it. Would it not be wiser, if only for the poor, unreasonable woman's sake, to remove herself from sight?

All this, however, wasn't the heart of the matter. If meetings with Mrs. Venable were difficult, how, with her son, would they after this be even possible? It wasn't likely that the miserable lad would be able to endure association with a woman who had been with him in so humiliating an extremity as that of yesterday. Poor boy! How copious and how transforming to the girl whose mind was now uneasily bent upon him the revelations of the past twenty-four hours had been! She remembered that the morning before he had seemed to her a singularly impenetrable egoist, with lapses into an artless juvenility at which she had been able to smile. Then she had been disturbed and angry, rather than further alienated, at the knowledge of his curious mental stress which their talk together had revealed. But what she wasn't likely soon to forget was that she had been with him at his first sight of his father's statue; she had watched his astonished eyes as they first fell upon it, and she had shared his brief emotion of delight before he had disclosed to her, stranger as she was, his complete reaction of despair.

So nakedly, in that strange hour, had the last cloak of reserve deserted him, that it now struck her that no one else could ever know Lawrence Venable in the sense in which she already knew him. It was as though he had been, on that memorable yesterday, a child intrusted to her strange guardianship, whose sudden grief had driven it to sob on her unaccustomed bosom, and for whom she had

been stirred to inexplicably tender pity—whom she had even, with some art unsuspected in herself, been able to soothe. The boy would have slipped from her, she knew, and wandered helplessly about the streets, if the knowledge of what wise things to say, to urge, had not mysteriously come to her. And oddly, she had been able to understand the meaning of the change in him. She knew that what she had seen was that first essential smiting from which youth never recovers, and after which it goes secretly armed and laughs with an altered gaiety and is brave with a deliberate and conscious courage. At the time she had been glad to be with him, because she felt that she could help and save him. But now that it was over, and the recollection was to be adjusted with everyday living, how could it be between them, if he remembered those dreadful hours only half as well as she?

With lagging steps the girl passed down the road and entered the Venables' gate. And already here a difference met her and struck her sharply in the face. For the yard was empty of the shouts and scampering feet that always before had filled it. Instead, there was only Christy, writhing forlornly about a post of the veranda. Inside the house strange figures moved briskly past the windows. The studio shutters had not been lowered since the day before and the sun was streaming in.

Charlotte altered her gait and walked quickly toward the studio, her breast filled with foreboding. Inside the door she paused and cast swift, jealous glances over the trail of invaders. Directly beneath her eyes stood the silver tray with the bottle and glasses that had been used the night before. In the middle of the floor lay an untouched scattering of plaster fragments. Mark Venable was not to be seen; she had in some way known that he would not be. But near the broken "Pan" stood a figure so pale and silent as to seem, even in the full morning light, almost unreal, almost like a ghostly reminder of some unforgettable tragic thing. Lawrence looked at her without speaking. She was not even sure that he saw her.

It was not without a definite effort that Charlotte found her voice. "Where is Mr. Venable?" she asked faintly.

"My father's ill," a tired voice answered.

"Yes, I know, I feel it. It's something very dreadful? Tell me!" she demanded.

At the intensity of her concern, at the energy with which she looked through him, beyond him, Lawrence shrank a little, as though she were withholding from him a comfort toward which he had instinctively leaned. "I can't tell you how bad it is," he said without expression. "I don't know."

"May I go in the house, then? May I see him?"

He roused himself and placed a chair for her. "No; wait," he forced himself to say. "Don't go. I shall have to tell you. It seems strange that you don't know, it happened so long ago. It was here, last night. Do you see the plaster? A piece of it flew in his eye. It has hurt him, but they don't know yet how seriously. There are people there, doctors and nurses. I can't stay in the house—the children ask me questions—so I have come here."

She did not speak for a moment. But it was evident that she was deeply agitated.

"Then I mustn't go in? I mustn't do anything?"

"I'm afraid not."

She looked at the white fragments on the floor as though they would help her to piece out the mysterious story. "He was working here, then, after he came home?"

"No. He told mother how it happened and she has told the others, the doctors and everyone. He said that he was looking at it, at my 'Pan,' and holding it high and turning it about, when it slipped from his hands and fell, and a piece glanced from the bench there and struck him."

"How very terrible—and how very strange! He was alone, then?"

"No; I was with him."

"Oh! Then you saw?"

"Don't, don't ask me questions. I will tell you." He hesitated, then looked at her almost defiantly. "I did it. The

thing was standing between us. I took a mallet and struck it with all my might. He was standing directly over it. He couldn't have helped getting hurt. I might almost have—done it deliberately."

Charlotte looked at him in a horror she could not veil. "You poor boy!" she breathed softly.

"You remember how little you thought of me yesterday," he went on stonily. "But you see how much less you are obliged to think of me today. Yesterday I was only jealous of him. Today I have blinded him."

"Oh, but this isn't a question of you or me! What do *we* count for?" Then, very gently, she urged him to tell her what had happened. "Do you mean that you had really been telling him?" she asked incredulously.

"I told him, yes. And he understood. He did his best to comfort me—you know how he is. But I was almost insane with disappointment. I wanted to put sculpture out of my life forever. And that was the method I chose of doing it. I knew you would have to know. I've been waiting for you."

"You mean that no one else does know?"

"No one ever will. I couldn't tell my mother. It's terrible enough as it is. Oh, if I could have told at first—but there wasn't time. And now, if I should tell them, it would seem like some ghastly irrelevance. I can see the way they would turn from their instruments and bandages and look at me—as if I were an interfering lunatic! But I suppose that miserable creatures of my sort always have one confidant. And you are the kind of person one tells things to; you can't help that."

"I think it was very natural to tell me." She tried to speak quite calmly, though her head was whirling. "And I know that later you will tell—"

"It's of no use for you to say that," he interrupted her, almost roughly. "And I'll tell you why. I never knew I was a coward. I can't believe I have been—before. But father knew. He knew I should not want to tell. Just see how quickly he must have thought,

and what positively divine magnanimity he had. From the first instant he knew from the pain that he was badly hurt. He faced the possibility that he might be done for—and saw how I should suffer if he was. And perhaps he had another notion—that people would think we had quarreled and that I had meant to hurt him. So he told that lie to mother immediately. And this was only a minute after I had confessed that I grudged him his success! But that isn't the worst of it. He wouldn't have said what he did unless he had known that I would acquiesce in it, let it pass. And I have. And I shall. What do you think of me now?"

"I think you're distracted, that you need food and sleep." Then she came nearer and laid her hand in an almost maternal fashion on his arm. "But there is something else. We've gotten in the way of talking frankly, so I can say this to you. Don't think any more just now about yourself or what unconscious share you've had in this. It's Mr. Venable we must think about, isn't it? There's only one thing for you, for any of us, to do. Don't you see it? Keep yourself sane and ready. And after you're rested a little, whenever you feel that you have to talk to somebody, make use of me. I'm going in the house now. Will you come with me?"

A faint smile came to his harassed face. "How does anyone dare to be as kind as you are? It's so terribly prodigal. Yes, I'll go in with you."

But as they turned to go, the door leading to the house swung open, and Alexandra Venable halted, her eyes searching the familiar interior in something more insistent than her usual manner. Encountering her son engaged in obviously familiar conversation with Charlotte, her face subtly altered.

"Lawrence—dear!" The syllables fell even more softly than usual, as softly as exhausted petals. "I've been looking for you."

The young man gave a loyal glance at the excluded Charlotte. "Is it imperative, mother? If it's not, I will come in just a moment. Miss Bourne—"

Charlotte interrupted, her face deeply

flushed. "May I ask if there is any fresh news, Mrs. Venable? I have only just heard—"

"None—yet," Alexandra answered from a weary distance. "The physicians are consulting. Whenever you're at leisure, Lawrence—"

As the door closed Charlotte turned to Lawrence. "You must go—quickly," she urged. "And will you do this for me? Let me know when you are sure that he is better—or worse? Probably I can be of no assistance in the house, but you will find me here. There's plenty to be done, plenty that Mr. Venable would wish done without delay. I've wasted time already."

There could no longer be any question of withdrawal. There was guard to keep over the treasure house, and Charlotte had not lost an instant in appointing herself to that duty. And in the days to come there would be workmen to direct, and weeks of solid work which she, as chief workman, was bound to accomplish, though in however sore travail of spirit. From this moment it would be a point of honor not to desert. She started to get her tools together. Her hands weren't quite steady, and that was tiresome. One couldn't afford nerves at this crisis. Perhaps a little preliminary housework would remedy them. Half an hour later the studio had been set in order, and the apprentice was determinedly chipping at a marble bust.

VII

WITHIN two days of its occurrence the news of Mark Venable's misfortune had spread abroad, and then incredibly soon an insistent stream of inquiry and solicitude descended. No reassurance was to be had from the doctors' grim announcements. The sculptor was half-blind and there was grave danger of complete loss of sight. Meanwhile the suspense might last for weeks, or it might be abruptly terminated. So that, as the days went by, the desire to learn news of the injured man proved to be, on the part of a multitude outside his own familiar circle, extraordinarily personal and in-

tense. Could it be Mark Venable, one might have wondered, of whom the world was talking? It was as though that obscure artist had been reborn. For the Venable concerning whom the newspapers published their conspicuous daily bulletins, and in whose behalf innumerable strangers, great and little, now made continual pilgrimage to the hitherto neglected house in Shrewsbury, was a man of genius, a national figure, a personality that even the man in the street held dear and indispensable. Almost overnight Mark Venable had become the charge and the concern of the great public. Telegrams flashed constantly between the anxious city and the astonished village. In the busy square on which it faced, the unknown gathered densely about the bronze "Democracy" and wagged their heads with intense conviction of its worth. Crudely they felt its beauty and its force, but with much surer perception they had seized upon the story of the sculptor's disaster; and there was profuse flowing of their facile, spendthrift pity, that the eyes that had so lately seen to produce the wonderful heroic bronze that towered shining above their humble heads were perhaps forever obscured.

But from poor Mark Venable, submitting with cheerful impatience to a bed, a darkened room and the rigorous machinery of illness, all this sudden trumpeting of his glories was as remote as any posthumous celebrity. And if, as he lay there, there had been woven with the tormenting tangle of his dreams the dimmest echo of the clamor that the world was making, he would have supposed it fever-bred. The week before, when he was strong and unscarred, they had not cared nor praised nor sought him out. The streets had not resounded with his name. How should he divine such cruelly capricious turning of the tide? Nor, for that matter, intensely preoccupied as they were, did any adequate sense of the strange thing that had come to pass awake in those nearest him. Charlotte herself did not fully realize what had come to her hero, and Alexandra did not even suspect.

Incident to its chant of Venable's

great work and its tragic interruption, the populace repeated, with appreciable gusto, the names of those famous specialists who were known to be in attendance on the house in Shrewsbury. James Brodhead, hearing of the accident on the day afterwards, had gone without an hour's delay to the Venables' and discovered, somewhat to his amazement, that the distinguished oculists were already in consultation. This had been Brodhead's own errand, but he had had the prompt foresight to bring also a considerable cheque, made out to Mrs. Venable herself, which, the rich man told her, was an advance on the Chicago commission. There could be no question of economy at such a time, he reminded her, perhaps a little sternly, for, since the woman did not weep, she baffled him; he thought she might be stupefied. She must spend recklessly, he urged, in Venable's behalf. It wasn't merely her personal affliction, nor his; it was the entire country's welfare that was to be considered. Alexandra accepted the money like a gracious creditor. Adversity had taught her many things, but not a humble attitude toward the world.

Every possible effort, therefore, had been made toward the sculptor's recovery, though the details of such ministration, performed under her very eyes by aliens who would give her no share in them, were scarcely tolerable to the sick man's wife. Alexandra had indeed secretly borne her deposed sovereignty with an ill grace. Her own hands, she believed, could have cared competently for her husband, even in this crisis, whereas the nurses even discouraged her presence in his room. At her unwilling distance she yearned fruitlessly toward him; he was far dearer to her, now that he lay stricken and helpless, seized from his dreary temple and the worship of his exigent god. It was as if he had become one of their own children, possibly even the dearest, because the most dependent; and in this woman the mother passion was an unwavering flame.

Outwardly, however, she seemed unshaken, almost serene; and Charlotte, determining not to be outdone in cour-

age, was thereby helped to keep, with a solemn steadfastness, at the work that she knew Venable would have wished her to pursue and finish. It is true that she had promptly been allowed to infer that her presence, at this time, on the fringe of the agitated household, was an intense annoyance to its mistress. During one incredible interview Alexandra had indeed intimated that it was scarcely seemly to have the studio open during the sculptor's illness, and that it was probably indiscreet for the assistant to work without supervision. Charlotte had always made rather an elaborate point of yielding to the older woman's subtle tyranny whenever Venable's own interests were not concerned, but on so definite and vital an issue as this she was immovable. The master's orders were to be carried out, and she stood there to do it. Even then Alexandra might not have withdrawn except for her perception that Lawrence had become in some strange way the interloping girl's ally. And a day or so afterwards the powerful Brodhead paused long enough to stamp Venable's assistant with his seal of approval. Charlotte after this was securer than she knew.

But apart from her anxiety, it was a forlorn matter working all day at the tasks Venable had given her, without the immense stimulus of his comment and encouragement. His absence left the atmosphere stagnant and meaningless, altered the place from a temple to a mere workshop. But she hadn't been without companionship. It became a habit of the younger Venables to stray in nowadays at all hours for desultory conversations. And because they so frankly displayed their intense devotion to their father, she could not bring herself to drive them out, as Venable himself would cheerfully have done. Then at all times, whether he was with her or not, she could feel Lawrence Venable reaching from his isolation toward her friendliness. With that strange new humility of his, he would come and beg her, while she stood at work, to talk with him about something far off and unharassing—the politics of New Zealand,

or the Viennese opera or astronomy or fairy tales—anything but the one subject that was agony. And often in the evening, after she had gone home, he would slip away and follow her and persuade her to go for a walk. But her companionship on these uneasy excursions was scarcely so great a kindness on Charlotte's part as Lawrence insisted. For the same profound concern was uppermost in both their minds, and in that very fact there was a certain assuagement. They were both young, and for the time being acutely lonely. Moreover, her knowledge of the boy's misery drew out all Charlotte's protecting tenderness; and it was a new and engrossing experience for her to take constant thought for his only too evident need, to feed for the time and sustain him, as she well knew that she did.

One night he found her frankly waiting for him on the demure white stoop of the little house where she lived. She rose when she saw him and joined him at the gate—and inside their window the elderly pair leered indulgently at each other. To theirs, or perhaps to any vision, the scene perfectly conformed with the ancientest traditions of enamored youth. But these old-young companions were free of all self-consciousness; the burden that they shared saved them at least from that.

"Suppose we walk out toward the meadows," she suggested, "where we can get a sweep of air. It will be good for both of us. And I want to tell you something."

He knew from a vibration in her voice what her mind was full of, and that she did not intend tonight to weave distraction for him.

"You saw father today," he said quietly.

"Yes. He sent for me. May I talk to you about it a little?"

It was easier now to face anything whatever, with the little town and its faint yellow lights slipping rapidly past them, and the familiar muffled sounds of the stricken household beyond all reach of hearing, and the sweet night wind blowing fresh in their faces.

"Why, I'm waiting for it." He smiled

at her with a fine show of courage. "Tell me, by all means."

"I had been waiting for him to send," the girl recounted slowly and thoughtfully, "and yet, when at last he did, I was horribly afraid to go. I think I must have forgotten what he was like, to be afraid. For of course"—her voice swelled to a full, round note of admiration—"he made it unbelievably easy. We talked precisely as naturally as on any other day—and think, *think*, of our being able to! He questioned me very closely as to what I had done, and I really think it pleased the dear man very much that I could make some sort of showing. He was so genuinely interested—and it hadn't occurred to me that he would be. Work was the real thing to him, as it always is. And I didn't have to pretend at all. He simply swept me along with him."

"Then—and this is what I especially wanted you to know—he talked to me with the most perfect confidence of getting well soon and taking up his work. He even told me of an idea he's worked out for the new Chicago group, and it's an amazing one. He faces, of course"—the girl spoke now with slight hesitation and apology—"the matter of his—disability, but he says it will not really handicap him—and he made me feel it, too." She looked at him with appeal.

"Ah, yes; but the doctors don't feel that way. I know from what mother said today. You see, she knows of no reason for keeping the exact truth from me. They are afraid he will be wholly blind."

"He can't!" Charlotte spoke with deep intensity. "I know he can't. I know his spirit. It's invincible. Those strange men can't know that. But *you* should know it!"

They walked faster, and for a moment in silence. The night was soft and studded with dull stars. The wide room of space seemed narrowed and familiar. The white road slipped lightly under their quick feet. Lawrence felt magically soothed and stilled. It couldn't be that these unlovely things they had been speaking of were realities—realities that in another hour they would have to face

again! Charlotte lightly seized her companion's arm, as though to rouse him to a share in her convictions.

"Then," she went on, "there was another thing. He spoke of you—after Mrs. Venable had left the room. He seemed to have divined that you had talked freely with me. You know he has an almost psychic perception—I've often noticed it. 'What's Lawrence doing?' he said. 'Can't you cheer him up a little? He's been taking this thing a great deal too hard. You've noticed what a sensitive, high-strung type he is; I'm afraid his temperament is almost a curse to him. I wish you could do something for the boy. They think people shut up in sick rooms become as dull as geese. But I can tell you that they don't. And I know, as well as if I could see, that that boy acts as if he'd had a death blow. And it's nonsense. Can't you make him realize that I shall be as well off as ever in a few weeks? Better off, in fact, because there's money ahead. Has he said anything of this sort to you?'"

"Oh, no. We've stifled ourselves.—Neither of us has mentioned real things. I go in there every day and tell him something about Paris, or rake up some moldy old joke and manage to cackle over it myself—and then I go out again."

"I know; you haven't been natural with him. He knows how you've been suffering, and he's heartbroken about it. You're such an idol to him always."

"Father isn't a sentimentalist," Lawrence remarked a little sullenly.

"I almost think he is, a little, where you are concerned," she retorted. "But won't you accept this message he's sent you and be different with him after this?"

"I'm nothing of an actor. And, as you say, he'd never be deceived, whatever antics I went through. If he should get well—oh, even partly well—I could be different. But now—" He made a gesture of despair. "Why, I'm merely living on from day to day because of some spell you've put upon me!"

"Then do what I ask!" she entreated in her sweet, serious way. "For there is more that I must ask of you later.

"There's always one possible action, isn't there, that will straighten things a little?"

"Oh, I know," he bitterly assented. "And it's as far beyond me as the moon. Suppose I should see those reporters when they come out tomorrow—I've dodged them so far. Suppose I should tell them to stop their absurd speculating on how a sculptor of father's experience could ever have handled a plaster cast so that a splinter of it could have reached his eye—and print the truth instead; print in big type that I blinded him, because I had a fit of jealousy; that I am afraid to confess and that my father himself is shielding me. It would give them something new to write about, wouldn't it? And it would satisfy *you*. You would think I had done right. But would father like it? You can't tell me that you think he would."

They had reached Charlotte's gate. "I oughtn't to have let you talk of this," she lamented, her voice dulled with disappointment. "But such wonderful hope and faith came to me today while I was with your father, and I wanted to share it with you. But you're resistant. You're hard. You won't let me in."

"Not let you in!" He faced her with a sudden intimacy, and his eyes held hers for an illumining moment. "But you *are* in! I live by you! You save me, over and over again. . . . Is your door open? Are you safe? Good night." He seized her hand, impetuously kissed it and walked quickly away.

VIII

FOR several days afterwards Lawrence was scarcely visible. Charlotte's concern for him deepened, and pangs of self-reproach shot through her confidence. It seemed plain to her that she had magnified her power to advise and lead the unhappy boy, that her touch had failed in delicacy, that in some cruel way she had blundered with him. Then one morning, just as she had definitely made up her mind to go to him, he came into the studio with a definitely lighter step, and found her patiently answering an

antiphonal catechism as to the riddles of the universe skillfully propounded by Christy and Jane. Often he had appeared not even to see the children, but now he stopped, considered, then called his fat, solemn-faced little sister to him.

"Do you suppose Miss Bourne will forgive us if we have a secret, Jane?" And he whispered in her ear.

The child flung her short arms about her brother's neck. "Do you mean now?" came her hoarse, eager whisper.

"Now. I made it for you myself. Don't you think you'd better run along and find it?"

Jane couldn't run, but she nevertheless accomplished a prompt if ungraceful exit; and after only an instant's deliberation Christy thought it expedient to follow her.

Charlotte looked up soberly. "You're not playing a joke on them?" she half accused him.

"And destroy my reputation with them forever? Nothing of the sort. I had just put up a little swing for them; they had been coaxing me to. I suppose that was a perfectly fair device for getting them out of the way, when I had to see you alone?"

"I think you must have good news." She looked up at him hopefully. "You have a breath of it about you."

"There's no news yet from father this morning. The reporters have been waiting for an hour already. Have you fully understood, I wonder, that since the unveiling and since his—accident, father's admittedly a great man?"

"It came over me a few days ago, and I found myself resenting it. How unjustly such things come!"

"In this country, yes." He paused for a moment. "My news has to do with the tiresomest person you know. I went into town yesterday."

"And you found adventure?"

"Scarcely that. But I had rather an—informing experience. Do you care to hear?"

"Oh, I've been immensely lonely," she confessed. "Do tell me—anything."

Unconsciously he picked up a lump of the yellowish waxy material that

sculptors use in modeling, and began to manipulate it. Charlotte caught the quick, skillful play of his long, white fingers. How could she have failed to notice before the unlikeness between the boy's delicate, almost womanish hands and Mark Venable's?

"It struck me suddenly," he began—"oh, the idea came, of course, from something you had said to me—that there was one thing I could do for father—if he should get well. Perhaps in any case. And that was to find a place for myself, get myself out of the way. It had to be done. Mother loves to have me about, I know, but I've been an abominable bore to you—and I can't be of any use in simple ways. David chops all the wood and I've proved already what a duffer I am in the garden. I don't know weeds from potatoes."

"So what is it that you've done?" She looked up at him almost frightened, and he caught her glance steal to the wax in his hand. He flushed and set it aside quickly.

"That's all ended, of course," he said sharply. "Over and done with forever. I know you understand how that is—and I suppose I shall have to make other people understand. There's my mother, dear lady. Did I tell you that the other day, when Mr. Brodhead was here, she actually suggested to him, in that sweet, indirect way that lots of lovely women have, that some commission be given *me*? It wasn't an easy moment for Brodhead, but he looked at me in a way that showed he'd taken my measure as a sculptor. Oh, well, that was a trifle. But it helped me to decide something. And yesterday I went in to hunt up Tom Belknap. You remember, possibly, my speaking of him the other night?"

"Oh, of course. The man who was so kind to you when you first went to Paris?"

"That's Tom. He taught me everything—outside of work, I mean. You see, he lived just under me, and he did everything in the world for me except rock me to sleep. He was studying architecture then, and he's made a success of it since. I went to ask him for work."

Charlotte lifted understanding eyes.

"That took courage," she gently interposed.

"You'll see how far I am from deserving applause. What I really wanted to tell you was that I got outside myself yesterday, as I never had before in my life. Indeed, I suppose that I didn't know what detachment means, until very recently. Well, I knew, of course, that Tom was fond of me, and that he used to think rather well of me; and though I hadn't definitely pictured anything of the sort, I suppose I must have had a subconscious expectation that when I appeared he would make something of a fuss over me, and that that would rouse me a bit. But it was a very good thing for me that I went. For positively the only thing that dear old fellow saw in me was a link with my father! Before he could shake hands with me, he asked for the news from father—"

"But surely that wasn't strange."

"Not in itself, of course. But, you see, I didn't realize how he would look at things. I never talked much over there about father as an *artist*. I always thought of his ability as merely the contrivance that had furnished my own motive power. So just for an instant, because I wasn't prepared, it gave me a shock to find that Tom Belknap didn't care a sou to find out what I might have been doing. But he was absolutely quivering with excitement over father and father's work. Oh, he's a man of judgment, Miss Bourne! You must know him. He knows everything father has ever done, which is more than I do. He was at the unveiling, too, and you should hear him talk about 'Democracy'!"

"Well, before I could tell him what I'd come for he rushed me into their private office to see his partner, Tritch. 'Here's Mark Venable's son!' he said, very impressively, as though anything connected with father were distinctly well worth showing off. Can you imagine how strangely, under those circumstances, that sounded in my ears? I really felt as though I were on a cloud, distant and astonished, looking down for the first time on my familiar, unnecessary self. Here was the best friend I ever had, and the one, too, who knew all

my youthful flourishes as a sculptor; and even to him I wasn't an individual. *Mark Venable's son*—I repeated it over and over to myself and looked down with more and more curiosity at the chap they had found that name for."

"Ah, but think what a name it is!"

"Don't imagine I'm not proud of father's name. Or that I don't realize how little I shall ever deserve to stand in the shadow of it. But don't let's talk about that now."

"We sat together and talked for a long time about father, Belknap and Tritch and I. The fellows agreed entirely about his work. Tritch said there wasn't a man alive he'd rather know. They were both ready to put him at the top notch of things. Finally I managed to tell what I'd come for, but it made very little impression on them. Even dear old Tom didn't shed a tear over my giving up sculpture. He only said mildly: 'This isn't what you've been working for, Larry.' I asked him to let me try it nevertheless. He and Tritch consulted a moment, but it was the merest farce. They would have taken me in if I had been deaf, dumb and blind. There wasn't anything legitimate about it. I got work simply and openly on the strength of being father's son."

Charlotte looked troubled. "I'm not sure that you ought to have done this."

"It's too late for you to take that attitude now," he said lightly, almost happily.

"You can't mean that I suggested—"

"Whom else have I talked with?" he demanded perversely. "Of course it came from you. Everything comes from you. You are—"

"Nevertheless, I honestly admire you for doing it," she resolutely broke in. "What does Mrs. Venable say?"

"Mother? Why, I haven't told her. I don't begin until next Monday, you see. Must I tell her? She won't understand."

"How can you *not* tell her?" Charlotte met the subject with her fundamental candor.

"Oh, very well. If you won't let me off." Lawrence assented as readily as

though her few gently spoken words had not reversed his entire intention, then left the room on the errand that was of her tacit direction.

Inside he found Alexandra in low, serious talk with two doctors, who were just leaving her. Her small, lightly poised head was bent in an attitude that he did not recognize. When they were alone she turned and silently faced him, and something unfamiliar in her look smote him strangely. "What is it, dear?" he asked with all his old gentleness.

Tears came to her eyes at the sound of his voice. She did not answer, but motioned to him to come to her, and when she had sunk down upon a chair, with her boy's arm about her, she sat for a long time shaken with sobs. Lawrence soothed her with the greater solicitude in that her emotion curiously awed him. She had never been a woman of facile tears. And even since the catastrophe she had been so mysteriously calm he had supposed her self-command invincible. What could agitate her so profoundly now, when for weeks past she had been outwardly unshaken? Or was it, he wondered, that she had not before deliberately faced the thing as he himself had hourly faced it, day after day and night after night, till he was scarcely sane?

Little by little he gently questioned her, and as she gradually grew calmer he learned, a few words at a time, the truth. A final, decisive operation was to be performed upon Mark Venable that afternoon. The arrangements were being made rather hastily; the physicians said that they hoped thereby to prevent the sculptor's losing both his eyes. By the following day they would know how it was to be with him. Furthermore, they had told Venable himself.

It was the recollection of this scene, it appeared, from which Alexandra could not recover.

"But *what* did they tell him, mother?" Lawrence pressed her feverishly. "That he might hope?"

"They were very cautious. They put it as gently as they could. One look

went over his face, an old, gray look, when they first told him, and after that he was perfectly composed and cheerful. He said he was glad that it was to be decided, for he knew the uncertainty was wearing on himself and all of us. I am sure he doesn't hope at all. And it may be better that he doesn't."

"And do you, mother?"

"I must. One wouldn't dare not to. It might affect the result. Oh, we must hope with all our hearts! But, Lawrence, dear, I know the doctors don't! I heard them talking."

Lawrence could not answer this. The two sat for a long time in silence, nearer in spirit than they had been for years. At last Alexandra half rose to go, then turned back, almost shyly, and kissed her boy. "Dear Lawrence," she assured him tenderly, "you are an immeasurable comfort. I must go to him now for a moment. He will look for me. Will you come, too?"

He hesitated. "A little later. I'm not quite braced for it yet. Father's so superhumanly perceptive and alert—and I don't want him to get inside my mind today."

"Then, shall I find you here?" she pressed him.

He flushed slightly. "I shall have to go first to tell Miss Bourne. She is so very anxious. She will have to know."

"Always Miss Bourne!" She paused and looked back at him, not for the moment jealously or critically, but rather almost wistfully. "Lawrence, are you in love with her?"

"In love with her? Because I give her bulletins of father's condition when she's beside herself with anxiety? Mother, dear, isn't that a woman's question?"

"Are women's questions never answered, then?"

Though the speech was softly said, the familiar, everyday Alexandra reappeared in it; but she left without waiting for her son's reply.

IX

BUT if Alexandra did not deflect her son's impulse, she, or at least the news that she had told, succeeded in delaying

him, as it had succeeded also in driving from his mind the errand on which he had sought her. It was not until after he had been alone a little that he slowly started to go to the studio, then paused and turned back again. He would not go to Charlotte—yet. A tumult of swift rushing suggestions, influences seemed beating in upon him. He was stirred by a sense that was not familiar to him, a sense of having undeliberately reached a crisis. He felt an inexplicable and torturing excitement, an excitement that demanded relief. It was as if for a long time he had been unconsciously preparing himself for a moment that now, suddenly, dreadfully, was upon him.

Why, of course he had known from the beginning that his father would be blind. It was mere childishness to have allowed himself any vainly deluding hopes. And it wasn't merely that he had crippled his own father and destroyed a great artist. His mother, her children—who knew how many others?—were pitifully involved in the catastrophe he had caused. There would be more misery than could be reckoned, and all through him; he was far from attempting to minimize his responsibility. And now the worst itself was going to happen—would happen in a few hours. Indeed, it was already an hour since his mother had told him, and there he was still sitting dazedly with his head in his hands, and those great august wings of destiny, whose shadowy nearness he had never felt before, flapping ominously above his head.

There was another thing that he had known—latterly. He had not known it from the beginning, this necessity for confession, for expiation. And even when he had admitted it to himself, he had supposed that the moment for it might be deferred. Some time, he had believed, later on, months from now, when the air should be emptier perhaps of fears and shadows, he would tell the story that he should have told at the beginning. But now, already, when he was not prepared, the crisis was come. In the face of his father's ultimate disaster there must be an end of shamming. He must tell—*now*.

Unsparingly he sketched to himself the penalties of his confession and exulted in them grimly. The world that had at last adopted Mark Venable would see that no blasphemous hand maimed her great sculptor with impunity. For a time—oh, he could foresee—they would feel for him resentful loathing and contempt; perhaps a few would pity. And afterwards he would survive merely as an ugly tradition, the wretched instrument of his father's misfortune. A slow, shameful extinction would be his sentence, the cruellest and most ingenious that could be framed for a self-worshiper, such as he had been. Yet with passionate honesty the boy hoped that he might not be spared one pang of his atonement. And an inevitable part of it, he shrewdly knew, was that no one would understand either the violent action that had resulted so tragically—or his belated, useless acknowledgment. It is true that there was Charlotte. But she was scarcely to be reckoned with the rest of the world. Sweet and human though she was, one nevertheless found oneself thinking of her as like one's very conscience itself, as the embodiment almost of that imperturbable goddess. Oh, assuredly, Charlotte would understand.

He heard the subdued voices and conscientiously gentle steps of some of the younger children who were approaching the house. To avoid a meeting with them, he roused himself and undertook his delayed mission to the studio, where he found Charlotte making ready to go for her luncheon. As hopefully as he could he told her his news, and promised her that as soon as the definite result of the operation should be known, she should have immediate word of it. It wasn't necessary to tell her the dreadful certainty, now.

"It's so hard, isn't it, to stay passive—not to be able to do for him!" She tried to smile a little as she left him, but Lawrence believed that with that un-failing gift of hers she had divined all that he had feared to say.

He found that his eyes were following her as she walked slowly down the road. He turned sharply and looked at the

clock. It was later than he had supposed; there was no time left for dreaming. Going to the door, he softly whistled for Christy, who adored being summoned to the studio for messenger service, and despatched the child to ask his mother to come to the studio when she should have an opportunity. Here at least, there would be no interruption for the next half-hour.

But in less than five minutes Alexandra was beside him, her hand on his shoulder, her alarmed, questioning eyes looking into his. Lawrence made no preface, no apology. It is astonishing in how few words a story may be told when there is effort neither to lay stress nor to extenuate. And the narrative of that evening in the studio that had ended in his father's blindness came brief, colorless, bald. But, harsh as its outlines were, it was almost a relief to Alexandra's deep anxiety. She did not know what it was she had feared to hear on this strange, unforgettable day, with terrors lying everywhere in ambush.

"That's all, mother. Now you know everything." The boy stood rigid, looking away from her. But she said nothing, only came swiftly to him and put her arms about him. He bent his head hopelessly. Hadn't she heard? Then a warm and gradually clarifying recollection penetrated him. Why, of course—it had always been like this. Years ago, in the tragic issues of infancy, it had been a miraculous unburdening to tell Alexandra of one's sins. She had always seemed in those days to have ungrudging leisure to listen; her absolutions had been effectual and prompt, and, chiefest marvel of all, she had never failed in understanding. And now again she had understood and listened—and absolved. For a moment her understanding and her compassion were sweet—and then he found that he resented them. How had she, how had anyone who *knew*, the right to be kind to him? Even Charlotte had been too kind. He did not long for kindness now. It was stings and scourges that he craved. For upstairs at that very moment lay his father, awaiting with forgiving calmness the stroke that was to deprive him of creative

power—and when one was Mark Venable, one might as well be shorn of life itself. With the knowledge of this, Alexandra could remit judgment, could be weakly compassionate?

"You understand, mother," he reminded her almost sternly, "that what I have told you isn't to be a secret any longer. Everybody must know."

"Leave it to me, dear," she soothed. Her furlough was short, and she was already on her way back to her husband. But Lawrence caught a look in her face that he knew.

"I want you to tell David and Emily and—all of them," he insisted. "And the doctors must know. It might—it might affect their treatment, even, if it isn't too late."

"Yes, dear, yes."

"Oh, you won't do it, mother," he sighed. "I can see that you won't. But I shouldn't have asked you. I will tell them myself. Here is Dr. Ainsworth coming now. I won't delay him an instant." And he rushed from the room.

Alexandra tried to detain him, but his determination outstripped her. His glance at the strange physician's severely modeled, unsympathetic face had been an irresistible spur. Here was a man into whose judgment of him no sentiment would enter. Here was the proper audience for his confession, and the thing would be over with.

The distinguished oculist did not pause willingly. He did not with entire willingness come to Shrewsbury, New Jersey. Having arrived there, it should take him less than a minute of his elaborately subdivided and exceedingly expensive time to go from his automobile to his patient's bedside. It was no more usual for the stray inquirer to block his path than for a locomotive to be held up for a chat. Yet here he was actually being forced to halt, almost before he had stepped from his car, by a tall, pale youth whom he didn't know, yet whom, now that his attention was demanded, he did remember as having impinged upon the rim, once or twice, of his own highly concentrated consciousness. What was it that the boy

was saying? It was seven minutes before two already, and—

Lawrence told his story with what haste he could. But he had scarcely gotten past the first few words when the doctor's glance flew off to the setter puppy, who was sleeping on the lawn. "What I have to say concerns my father's case," Lawrence had insisted. "Yes, yes," the doctor had agreed, but had continued to look at the sleeping puppy. It wasn't easy, and it was certainly grotesquely futile, to talk to a man who wouldn't look at you, who obviously didn't care what you were saying, but who nevertheless forced himself to listen to the end. And then a civil word or two, a grasp of the hand, a rapid consultation of the physician's watch and the interview was over; the confession had been made again. But what had it mattered to the man of precious minutes and scant speech? By the time he was upstairs he had doubtless forgotten it. The business of saving a man's sight was what concerned him now. What had he to do with the sluggish workings of Lawrence Venable's conscience?

Lawrence stood dazed where the doctor had left him. He had the feeling that one sometimes has in dreams, of crying with a loud voice and finding no one that will hear. But he must be heard; he could not live till he was heard; he could not face Charlotte Bourne. Should he stand in the center of Shrewsbury village and shout his story? There must surely be one listener in that unhurried market place with no preoccupation of his own who would have leisure to hear and energy to blame him! Over in the deep grass he saw Christy and little Jane chasing butterflies. Should he tell *them*? They would listen. But they would cry afterwards. Would anything be served by that?

"I beg your pardon—isn't this Mr. Lawrence Venable?" A civil voice at his elbow addressed him.

Lawrence turned and faced a young man of rather indeterminate appearance. Formulas of explanation that must have been many times repeated slipped easily from the newcomer's lips.

He represented a morning newspaper. He had come out, as usual, for news of the sculptor's condition. But inside the house no one was at present at leisure to speak with him. Lawrence found himself answering the stranger's questions with singular ease. There was no apparent gain in Mr. Venable's case. But he was to be operated on that afternoon. Tomorrow the newspapers would learn the result.

"Then, so far today there is no new development?" The reporter was briskly perfunctory. He had been assigned to Shrewsbury a great many days in succession, and he now had the manner of one who is asking a discharge from duty and already mentally consulting a time table.

"Yes, there is one thing I want to tell you," Lawrence amazed himself by saying. The words had seemed to frame themselves, to leap from his mouth of their own force.

Almost automatically, at the sound of the first syllable suggesting disclosure, the reporter regained his attentiveness, forgot his time table. The two walked together away from the house.

"The story of my father's accident has never been told. Now that there is grave danger of his being entirely blind—in any case, indeed—I should prefer that it became known."

Lawrence spoke with a certain solemnity. Something not unlike an electric current seemed to have leaped lightly over the reporter's impressionable surfaces. He positively quivered now with readiness to assimilate. And the revelation was one that, startling as it was, came rapidly, coherently, without encouragement or pressure.

At last Lawrence had found an audience; and the knowledge of it stung and exhilarated him. Standing there in the open air, talking for ten minutes with a young man whom he had never seen before, he was really addressing a world as wide as the four winds of heaven. Was this expiation? He would know soon.

X

AN hour later Charlotte Bourne was patiently occupied upon some work to

which she was conscious that she gave rather less than her entire attention. There was a certain sound that she awaited. It puzzled her that the sound was so long delayed. At last a man's steps approached the outer door, then paused. Charlotte turned with her slow, sweet smile to meet Lawrence.

But this time it wasn't Lawrence. It was a young man whom she recognized as one of the reporters that she had constantly seen during the last month. Once or twice she had spoken with him, given him the bulletin from the sick room. But today he had evidently come upon a different errand, an errand that he promptly put into incredible words. He had something to ask of her, something that stirred and alarmed her, that she dreaded to understand.

"Wouldn't it be better to explain to me why you wish to know these things?" she suggested gently. "For you will see that otherwise it is impossible for me to understand why your newspaper is concerned with Mr. Lawrence Venable's affairs, or why you should come to me about them."

The trespasser betrayed a slight embarrassment. He had been obliged to trouble Miss Bourne because, frankly, he had found no one else who could tell him what he needed. And, after all, it was only a few simple facts and a date or so—when young Mr. Venable had gone abroad and what he had done there and so on—just a few definite points, in order to describe him and place him.

"Oh!" Charlotte could not yet fully believe. "Won't you sit down?" she then for the first time proposed. "Or, rather, if we come into the room adjoining—there's a little confusion there, but I think we shall be less disturbed."

And when the reporter had followed her and seated himself where he was directed, he found that he was facing a young woman who suddenly seemed to have plenty of leisure and to have reconsidered her initial coolness.

But secretly, the serene and agreeable young woman was moved by an immense concern. She saw it was probable that poor Lawrence's secret was known. It was even possible that he himself had

disclosed it. She must have knowledge of these things immediately. Would mere asking do? She tried. It seemed that it wouldn't. The young man was entirely civil, but skillfully self-protective. But she *must* know what it was that he so dangerously possessed. Wouldn't another woman in her place be able to secure what she wished? All women weren't stupidly literal and outspoken as she was—when there were ends to gain.

Again she urged him, but in more roundabout fashion. The young man felt the flattery of her so clearly and sympathetically understanding his position. And even if she hadn't been talking as sensibly as she was, it was by no means a negligible point that he was having an opportunity to look at her. Charlotte's slow smile came always like a perfume-laden wind. Before one knew what he was about, he had yielded to the charm of it. After all, it wasn't much that she wanted, inasmuch as it was evident that she already knew the story. It would do no harm to admit a talk with young Venable. Furthermore, it seemed to be evident that in that tremendously nice way of hers the girl was bargaining with him. If he intimated what he knew, she would then be forthcoming with her facts about the queer chap it concerned.

Ah, there it was! Charlotte caught her breath as she listened to the young man's few revealing phrases. It wasn't a pleasant experiment, this making oneself nice for a purpose, but it had been shamefully easy—oh, shamefully!

Well, she had been successful, so far. She had learned, and by the most heaven-sent chance, what Lawrence, poor, overburdened boy, had done. But the real task lay before her.

Charlotte bent slightly forward. "There is just one more thing that I know you won't mind telling me," she said.

The unknown young man laughed nervously. "What is it?"

"There are five or six of you here, are there not, representing different papers? And you all work together in a situation of this sort? What one of you has, he gives the others?"

The reporter agreed.

"So you've already told the others what Mr. Lawrence Venable told you?"

"I came out early today," he admitted, half suspiciously. "I haven't seen the other men. When I get the whole story, I'll turn it over to them—yes, that's our understanding."

There was a long pause. Then entreaty rushed from the girl in a torrent. She had forgotten her brief calculated enchantments, her innocent dissimulations.

"You must never tell them." Her voice was low and intense. "You must never tell anyone."

And before he could protest at the absurdity of her prohibition she had begun to talk to him. She spoke rapidly, but her emotion lent an increasing unsteadiness to her speech, and her wide open gray eyes had deepened almost to black. Did he know the man he had been writing about all these weeks? Had he ever seen Mark Venable? He knew, of course—everybody knew now—what a great artist he was—that he was one of the few great men in his own country. But it wasn't so well known that he was perhaps the least fortunate one. He was not a young man any longer; and there had been many long years when his work wasn't recognized, when he had been in constant desperate need of hope and encouragement—and money. And during all that time he had been incredibly patient and courageous; he had never allowed himself a banal or trashy piece of work; he was a man of the old, heroic order. Then, in the most sudden, glorious way, good fortune had descended—opportunity, distinction, as well as rewards of a kind that would most richly bless that beautiful and needy family of his.

Charlotte spoke more slowly, if scarcely more composedly, as her task became more delicate. She ventured to tell of Mark Venable's extraordinary devotion to his children, and particularly to his eldest son, and of his parents' pride in Lawrence Venable. She even forced herself to speak of Lawrence himself, and of his gifts and possibilities.

"And then," she impetuously re-

minded her bewildered listener, "you know what came to Mr. Venable, on the very heels of his good fortune! And you know, as no one else knows but ourselves, the cruel way in which it happened. But after what I have told you, you will see—don't you?—that it is purely and intimately a family secret. That there is no one else in the world whom it concerns. You happen to know it because you encountered Mr. Venable's son in an overwrought condition. But the story is safe with you—I know it is. Have I told you that Mr. Venable's first thought, after he was hurt, was that his son's accidental responsibility for the thing must be concealed? So I can assure you that the intention you had when you came in here of publishing this story would cause him more suffering than he could really bear. And you know that tomorrow he may be blind—that already he may be. Don't you see that you must spare him—what you can?" Tears were streaming down the girl's face. "You *won't* tell anyone?" she begged again.

The young man rose. "I ought to," he said uncertainly. "But I won't. Don't worry about it, Miss Bourne. I'll promise you. It will be all right."

Charlotte grasped in both hers the hand he had stretched toward her. "You are so good," she thanked him. "I knew you would be."

The reporter left the house and walked down the shady road filled with emotions that he scarcely recognized. He was familiar enough with the sensation of bringing in a "big story," with the pride of it and the praise that follows. But those were professional emotions, emotions that every man in the office shared and shared openly. But this was something deeper, rarer; it was—for once—an intimate personal adventure of his own. Adventure? It was merely that he had made a certain concession to a family in distress. Or that was the way the girl, Miss Bourne, had put it. To him it had seemed rather as if she were pleading for young Venable because she cared for him. At all events, she had a big heart and she had talked from the depths of it. The

young reporter had an unacknowledged secret taste for romance for which his daily experiences usually provided scanty food. But it had been fed this afternoon. He went back to his office and cheerfully turned in five lines of copy.

Charlotte had been sitting for a few moments alone, incredulous almost of the success of that effort in which she had so unreservedly spent herself, when Lawrence found her. He came quickly up to her. "I think I'd better tell you," he said. "I've owned up to the thing. It was time. I hope you knew that I should."

"I know you did," she said. "But I've an acknowledgment to make, for my own part." And then she told him briefly what she had done.

He listened, silent from sheer amazement, to the last word of her story. "But it's incredible," he then burst out, "that you should have done it—*you!*"

"You're very much displeased, naturally," she assented, with the calmness of utter reaction. "I knew of course you would be. I took a great liberty."

He looked at her in a strained, puzzled fashion. "It doesn't make any difference how I feel. But what has become of *you*? This has changed the whole aspect of you. Are you, after all, just as obscure and bewildering and changeable as other women?"

He had accused her and she did not answer. He went on to drive his accusations home. "And what have you tried to do with me? For weeks you have tacitly urged this thing. Today I found courage to do it—and it was an enormous relief. But as soon as you hear of it, you secretly nullify it. Why did you do it? Everything is turned upside down. Where are we, any of us? I feel as unreal as though I had changed places with my shadow. And I suppose you're not real, either."

"Oh, how can you?" she said quickly under her breath. He saw that he had hurt her, but for the moment he could not care. "I think you haven't understood me," she gently added. "I did want you to tell your mother, to tell

those nearest you, because you seemed ill from brooding over it and because they had—hadn't they?—a right to know. But this very serious matter of enlightening the public—that concerns your father, too. He must surely be consulted first. And just now, that anything should add to his suffering—"

"Are you sure you understand yourself?" he interrupted. "You've been angelically kind to me—but are you sure you didn't believe, at the beginning, that I ought to be publicly chastened? I think you thought then that it would do me good—and that now you have changed your mind and decided I should be spared that part of it. I must confess that I can't see it any other way."

"It's quite plain, at least"—Charlotte had withdrawn a little—"that I've been intolerably self-righteous in our talks together. Please try to forget that I ever seemed to advise or to suggest. It's a fault of mine."

He turned away from her with a half-laugh, his petulance spent but the soreness of his disappointment evidently still unhealed. "I see that you won't let me ask you questions. All right—if you insist on being inscrutable. It's your privilege, I suppose. I didn't mean to be cross. We mustn't quarrel now, must we? I am going upstairs now. Mother is waiting for me. If I may, I'll come back later."

And Charlotte, left alone, found herself wondering why she hadn't been able to answer the impulsive questions Lawrence had flung at her. Why was it that she had felt today an imperative necessity for shielding him that she would not have felt two months before? What had he become to her, the strange youth who had brought so much grief and misunderstanding into that house?

XI

It may have been the very hopelessness of the case, as they saw it, that spurred the physicians to perhaps unprecedented effort, and, at all events, to a complete and brilliant triumph. For, though with little faith of their own or of

his to help them, they brought it about that Mark Venable could see.

"There's plenty left to work with, isn't there?" he demanded of them, after the incredible had been accepted. "And it won't fade again? It will stay with me?"

They gave him the hearty reassurance what up to this point his shrewd ears had missed from their careful voices. He would have to learn to adjust himself to his diminished vision, they told him. After that, there was no reason why he should not return to his work and keep at it as steadily as before.

"I'm a selfish cuss," he declared later to Alexandra. "It wasn't you, dear, that I thought of first, when I found I was going to see. And it wasn't the relief of not being a pauper and having children support me. It was the group I'm going to do for those Chicago people! I've thought of that thing every minute since I've been shut up here. And, Alex, I do so want to show you the way it's worked itself out. Lord, if they would only let me have some light and a pencil! Never mind, I don't need to see. I can draw it for you with my finger. Look!"

Days of delirious excitement followed, excitement to which the joyous household, even to Christy and the phlegmatic little Jane, gave itself up tumultuously, but from which the convalescent sculptor should of course have been shielded. But it wasn't easy, if indeed it would have been wise, to keep good news from him, and selection wasn't possible inasmuch as nowadays all news was "good." Since reports from the studio had been permitted, Charlotte came daily, to offer her punctilious budget and to listen when Venable chose to talk. She had steadily refused to go away for the rest that after her long strain he had urged upon her—but it was quite true, as she well knew, that he would have been almost childishly disappointed if she had gone; for during this nervous period of delay, before he could get to work on the plans that filled his brain, her faithfulness and her sensitive intelligence were more than ever necessary to him. Then, every few days,

Brodhead, as an especially privileged visitor, came out from town, each time presenting what seemed to the sculptor more and more stupendous information as to the good fortune that lay ahead. It was like being born again, he said, and into a world ineffably more wonderful and kind. Gradually other visitors were admitted, who more or less inadvertently dropped their suggestions of that high sudden pinnacle to which Mark Venable's fame had risen, while Charlotte discovered, and Alexandra read aloud to him, various critical articles that came from sources Venable could not ignore, and that placed him almost with the immortals. Humorously, as he accepted everything, the sculptor accepted the world's hastily revised estimate of his importance. He delighted to think of the surprises that he was preparing for those who had so recently discovered him, and that another two years' work would bring to their astonished eyes.

Indeed, in all this miraculous new world of the Venables there seemed but one troublous thing. And because she could least understand how it came about, the anxiety of this was chiefly Alexandra's. Lawrence's abandonment of sculpture, his long days in the architects' offices, at work in which he seemed increasingly absorbed—to this turn of affairs it was impossible for his ambitious mother to reconcile herself. It was immediate glory that she demanded for him, not additional long years of patient drudging, with who could know what outcome! But Lawrence himself, composed as he now appeared to be, could not discuss all this with her, or had begged her not to force him to. It was Mark, finally, who felt it necessary to intercede.

"You know, Alex," he set forth in his deliberate fashion, "it doesn't make any difference what direction the boy chooses to follow, if he *wants* to follow it. Let him be an architect or a painter or a pianist, anything, so long as the artist in him is free to come out. And it will—it will. Be patient with him. He's had a bad shock. I'm proud of the way he's pulling himself together."

Early one evening, toward the sultry, hesitating close of the summer, Lawrence suddenly came upon Charlotte alone in a scanty, sweet garden of her own producing. She turned, startled, as he spoke, thinking he must have come upon a special errand; but he spoke of none. So after a little they sat down together on the half-parched grass in the humming, ripely fragrant silence of the end of August. They had seen each other rarely since Venable's recovery. There had been no avoidance on either part, but it was evident that, from whatever motive, Lawrence had plunged as deeply as might be into this new work of his. Her brief glimpses had told her that he wasn't ill, that he was getting hold of himself again. But this was scarcely enough to satisfy the almost maternal anxiety, as she had amusedly defined it to herself, that she had learned to feel for him. She had even been conscious of a certain humiliation that he no longer needed her, came to her for help. There was almost an awkwardness as they began to talk together. They had lost their habit of daily companionship and confidence, and it wasn't easy to adapt themselves to more casual intercourse. So, after a little, Lawrence brought out the announcement he had been holding in reserve. He was about to leave Shrewsbury. The work at the offices deeply engrossed him; it seemed best to give all his time, all his strength to it. He had decided to live in town.

"I suppose Tom has let me try my hand at the decentest part of the work," he explained half deprecatingly, "but really it's curiously fascinating. I'm going to give myself altogether up to it and see what happens."

"I understand why you go," she assented slowly. "I think you're quite right. But of course I'm sorry."

He hesitated. "How can you be?"

She chose her words. "Oh, but I've missed our—accidental companionship very much. The wheels are flying so fast in the studio now"—she laughed—"that there's no opportunity any longer for any sort of friendliness. The chil-

dren are driven out relentlessly. Poor little Christy, I think he minds it!"

"You put it very gently. I know quite well what a burden I have been to you this summer."

Charlotte moved with a certain impatience. It wasn't easy for her to keep to conventional symbols. "There's something I have wanted to say to you," she admitted. "I think I'll say it now. I am afraid that you think I was very blundering during those weeks when we had so many discussions. And probably I was at first. But later I understood better than you knew."

"Understood what?" he asked curiously.

She looked earnestly into his face and gently felt her way. "Why, that this has really been your ordeal, rather than your father's. You know that yourself, and I suspect he does, but of course no one else imagines. Very likely I oughtn't to speak of it, an experience that was so terribly, intimately yours. But I should like you to know that I understand what you have faced."

He was silent for a moment. "Oh, I've never thought *your* understanding limited!" he smiled at her. "It's so extremely luminous I wonder that anyone dares to stay within the reach of it. But it's too late for me to shield myself now. You've seen the worst of me."

"Poor boy!" She spoke with unconscious tenderness. "You mean I saw you with your wings outspread—"

"Paper wings, weren't they?"

She ignored his dismal interruption. "I didn't see then as I do now what a perilous thing your audacity was. You were like some young eagle poised on the edge of a great cliff. You hadn't really learned to fly, but you had the blood of eagles in you and you would have dared anything."

"And if it had been myself alone that had been dashed to pieces, it wouldn't have mattered."

"Dashed to pieces! Why, you've not even lost any of your strength. Wait and see—wait and see what you have *gained!* But you did lose belief in yourself and learned to be afraid. You learned so many strange, new, cruel

things through your father's accident. That's really all it's been for him, the blessed man, an accident. And I know that for you it's been the sharpest fire."

"Oh, but my experiences matter so little!" he protested. "The essential question is whether I've permanently injured my father. Of course I have, in the obvious sense. But I mean—as an artist. I haven't dared ask you before. But something you said just now—"

"But haven't you seen?" She looked at him amazed. "He's a bigger man than he's ever been before. He has more power. There are times when he has such an extraordinary fury of creative energy that I want to creep out of the studio. It's like being in the room with a demigod. I feel abashed—as if I had no place there. You see, the applause and the appreciation have been spurs to him, although he doesn't know. And that's natural and right and beautiful, just as we would wish it to be."

"Can that really be so? I know you always tell the truth!" He looked at her with boyish eagerness.

"You may believe I'm telling it now. And there's another way, too, of looking at your father's case. Don't you remember that he said one day in that dry way of his, that his accident had helped him? And in a sense, though it may seem shocking to say it, it has. That is, it hastened his celebrity. You know how, immediately after it, people thronged to him and talked of him and sang the praise of him everywhere. And it hadn't been so before. They hadn't realized him. The public is so dull until it gets an unmistakable hint—and then the problem is how to escape its almost fatuous attentions. But that isn't going to trouble him. He'll just keep on *doing*. And it seems as though the rest of life were to be pure golden opportunity to him. So that's what I meant. He's really come out a long way ahead. It's you who—" she faltered.

"It's all gone to prove my point, hasn't it?" he demanded of her. "Do you remember what I said to you about inherited faculties? I'm sure it made you angry, and I should think it might have, because I was so brutally ignorant as to

disparage my father. But my argument was right enough. Indeed, I think there must have been some premonition astir in me. There are never two great artists of the same blood. You weren't convinced of it then. I'm sure you'll agree with me now. Oh, but Fate was listening to me that day! She saw her time was ripe."

Charlotte felt that she must change the note to which her companion had sunk. "Need we have such a valedictory conversation?" she suggested. "You know you've been speaking as though we had reached the very end of everything. But you don't mean that, do you? Even though you're going away, aren't we to see you now and then?"

"I'm not sure. I know that I must get away from here altogether."

"But I don't think that's necessary or

kind," she said half lightly, for she could not believe him.

"It's both. You don't know the most hopeless thing of all that has happened to me—and the most beautiful."

"And I'm not to know?"

He was silent.

"I'm not to know?" she repeated more faintly.

There was an irresistible note in her voice. Lawrence rose impetuously and faced her, smiling. "Oh, do come!" he begged her. "Just one more walk! We can talk so much better then; and there are things to tell you—even more things! Will you come?"

"Oh, yes," she answered almost eagerly. And they walked away together.

Inside their window the old man and woman watched the young companions out of sight. Then they exchanged a kind glance of complete wisdom.



LOSS AND GAIN

By RHODA HERO DUNN

O TIME, stay but a little! Need we go
 So soon away from all we hold so dear?
 Turn back the days! The pendulating year
 Stop in its measured motion to and fro!
 'Tis true the circlings of the months bestow
 Rest on the burdened, on the homeless cheer;
 That every hour strikes from the heart some fear,
 Some bitterness, some life corroding woe.
 But also with each hour a dimmer rose
 Blooms in the maiden's cheek; a lesser fire
 Leaps on love's hearthstone; memory's pages close;
 And men of great ambitions faint and tire.
 Stay but a little, Time! There are no throes
 We would not bear for beauty, youth, desire!

THE GRAND SLAM

By M. McD. BODKIN

THE Bertram twins were already famous when Beck and I came up to Cambridge, though they were only a term in front of us. Even for twins their resemblance to each other was extraordinary. Not their most intimate friends, not tutor, professor nor proctor could tell one from the other. The result was they played all sorts of tricks with impunity and were immune from punishment. If one of them missed a lecture the professor could not tell which; if one of them was caught in a frolic the proctor could not tell which—and by a strange coincidence it was always the wrong twin that was accused. They were good-looking chaps enough, smart, black-haired and black-eyed, rather low-sized but square-shouldered and agile as monkeys. It was a sight to see them run and pass to each other at hockey, and at lawn tennis they made a combination that carried all before it. Indeed, they seemed to have no separate identity. Which was Eddie Bertram and which was Freddy only themselves could tell, and they kept the secret.

Their doings and sayings were the talk of the college, but somehow—no one could tell why—easy-mannered as they were and full of life and fun, the Bertram twins were not generally popular.

We were at Cambridge about a fortnight before we ran across them. Beck and I made a pretty good double at tennis, and one of the twins, Eddie or Freddy, I don't know which, seeing us play at the top of our form, challenged us for a fiver a corner. We took them on and got licked, three sets to two, every game and every set closely fought.

I believe either of us could have beaten either of them singly, but they were irresistible together.

The match caused a great sensation. It was agreed that Beck and I were to practise together and play them in another fortnight's time, and there were money wagers on the event. But Beck wouldn't play. At first he was keen enough, but after the first week I could not get him to practise, and at the end of the second he backed out. The bets were all off and I could see the twins were riled. When I suggested that they should coax Beck to change his mind they curtly refused.

I saw little or nothing of them after that, and my next falling in with them was a bit exciting.

I had always a fancy for a river. I think a river the most beautiful thing in the whole world, and it was a habit with me to go out very early of a morning in a Rob Roy canoe up the Cam before breakfast. I like a canoe best because you look the way you are going instead of moving backward as in a rowboat.

One morning when I was about two miles out of the town, coming round a bend in the river I saw a light two-oared outrigger in front of me, and a moment later I recognized the Bertram twins at the oars.

Whatever else they did well, they certainly rowed abominably. Each pulled away on his own account without the least regard for the other, and the boat went up the stream in short, jerky darts from one side to the other like a startled trout.

I was a bit surprised that they had never learned to pull together, but they gave me no time for surprise. Almost

as I saw them, the twin at the stroke oar caught a crab and pitched forward; at the same moment the twin at the bow pulled hard a short, jerky stroke, the crazy little boat capsized and the two white figures went under.

It was as sudden and comical as a scene in a pantomime, and I burst out laughing. I never for a moment doubted that both could swim. But my laughter was cut across by a cry of real terror that broke on the morning air and chilled me into silence. A moment afterwards one of the figures came up spluttering and panting and gripped the side of the upturned boat. The other was carried struggling down the stream. Halfway down between the boat and the canoe an arm and a head showed for a second over the surface, and a wild despairing scream cleft the air as he went under with a splash. The body swirled by close to the canoe, and I plunged my arm in up to the shoulder and gripped the white flannel of his shirt. Of course the canoe went over at once and we were in the water. But I could swim like an otter and I knew I had nothing to fear but the ducking.

The twin, whichever he was, behaved admirably. "No danger," I spluttered as I drew his head clear of the water and turned over on my back. "Keep quiet."

"Right-ho," he answered, and lay as still as a log in my hands and as easy to manage.

I ran him down current to the bank, keeping in front of the two boats.

"Jump about and get warm," I said as I pushed him up, "while I go for the other chap."

This time I brought the boat and the twin clinging to the keel to the bank together. Then I righted the boat, and drifting with the current managed to pick up one of the floating oars and so captured the others and the canoe, which I hitched to the boat's stern. The twins were as lively as crickets when I got back to them.

"If it wouldn't be too cold for you fellows," I said, "I'd row you back to college. You should pick up something about rowing and swimming before you take an outrigger again on the river."

"I'm as warm as toast," cried both together, in so exactly the same voice that it startled me. They were full of life and fun while I rowed back, and made light of the danger and the ducking.

"All the same, old man," said one of them as they went ashore, "we don't forget and we won't forget there would have been a brace of corpses in the river this morning if you had not turned up in the nick of time."

"The coroner would have had some trouble about the identification," laughed the other.

But if they took the matter lightly with me they didn't with others. I soon found that the pair of them were chattering all over the place of my gallant rescue. It was tiresome to be made into a little tin god and to have the fellows congratulating me about nothing. But I could not be angry with the twins, who I knew meant well and who behaved very decently when I spoke to them about it.

Day by day, the more I saw of them the more I liked them. I may say without boasting I was in with a very decent set at college, and all the fellows I knew got to like the twins as well as I did—all except my own particular friend Beck.

I took him to task about it at breakfast one morning. At least I was at breakfast; he had breakfasted some hours before. I suppose I was in none the better humor for having lost fifty-seven pounds at bridge the night before.

"Have you anything against the Bertrams, Beck?" I said a bit tartly. "I think I am entitled to ask."

"I think you are. I have."

"Why didn't you tell me that before?"

"Why didn't you ask me? I am quite ready to tell you now. One of them is a low-down scamp."

"Which of them?" I asked without thinking.

Beck broke out laughing, and in a moment I joined in. He has the most irresistible laugh of any man I know. He never laughs alone.

"Ask me another," he said, "and an

easier one, please. I wish I knew myself; I'd punch his head for him if I did."

"Is it as bad as that?"

"Worse. I would not talk of it to anyone but you. Do you know little Miss Bloom?"

"The little tobacconist girl? Only just to look at and nod to. Pretty little woman."

"Miss Bloom is a lady," Beck interposed a bit stiffly; "you don't seem to know that. Her father was a rector with a good income and very popular. He died suddenly, leaving his widow and only daughter a little less than nothing to live on. Lucy—I mean Miss Bloom—was a Girton girl at the time, and one of the brightest of them. But when her father died, by the help of some friends she got hold of the tobacco and cigar shop at the corner and has made a home for her mother and herself."

"You seem to know all about it, old chap," I said.

At this Beck blushed, actually blushed—Beck!

"Everyone knows all about it except yourself, thick head," he answered sharply. "All the chaps get their cigars and tobacco there. They get the best of good value, too, but that's not the question. They all treat her as the little lady that she is—all except your delightful Bertrams."

"One of them," I corrected.

"Yes, one of them, confound him and them!"

"Well, what did he or they do?"

"He was rude to Lucy Bloom, like the unmitigated cad that he is."

"Which is?"

"Don't jest, Kirwood; I'm in no humor for jesting. I confess my blood boils when I think of it. The poor little girl was having a walk by the river after a hard day in the shop, when this cub followed her, forced himself on her and tried to kiss her."

I confess I was not impressed. I could not share Beck's indignation.

"Well," I said, "where was the great crime in all that? We all of us snatch a kiss from a pretty girl once in a while."

At that Beck boiled over. I do believe our friendship was never so near

snapping as at that moment. Without answering he turned his back on me and walked to the door.

"I beg your pardon, Beck," I called after him. "I did not mean to vex you."

He paused with his hand on the door knob, turned and came back. "How would you like it if this cub tried to kiss your sister against her will?" he asked abruptly. "I tell you what, Kirwood, your sister is not one bit a better girl than Lucy Bloom."

"But—" I began.

"Oh, I know, you are going to repeat we all kissed girls in our day. That is all right where the girls don't mind. But only a cad would try to kiss a girl against her will, an unmitigated cad when the girl was Lucy Bloom."

He hadn't convinced me a bit by this nice distinction. Perhaps it was because I did not know Lucy Bloom at the time. But Beck seemed so hot in the business that I thought it safer not to argue it out.

"How did you hear all about it?" I asked.

"She told me herself. You need not look like that; she does not care two straws for me. I'm not in the least in love with her, either; I admire and respect her immensely, that's all. Well, about a week ago I caught her crying her eyes out one evening alone in the shop, and the whole story came out. She did not want to hurt her mother by telling her, especially as the mother always wanted her to give up the place. After the Bertram cub had insulted her she had ordered him never to put his foot inside the shop again. But they both come there regularly, especially when she is alone, and lean their elbows on the counter and look at her and talk to her whether she likes it or not. The trouble of it is she cannot in the least tell which of them she wants to get rid of. 'Cheer up,' I said; 'I'll soon find out.' But I didn't find out. I spoke to one of them and he said he was not the man. Then I spoke to the other—"

"To the other? Do you know one from the other?"

"Rather. But that was no use.

Each laughed and said it was his brother. There was no getting behind that. Miss Bloom could not help me in the least, and I could not thrash either of them on the chance it was the right one."

"Did you feel like that?"

"You don't know the girl, Kirwood, or you wouldn't ask. The gentlest little soul in the world. I tell you, my fingers itched to lick the chap, whichever it was, that insulted her. One good has come of it, however: they have both kept out of the place since I spoke to them."

"You might forgive and forget, and come to a wine I am giving tonight."

"I'd rather not, old chap, if you don't mind."

I did mind, but I did not say so. If the truth must be told, I thought Beck a little Quixotic to fall out with a chap so bitterly because he had kissed, or tried to kiss, a pretty girl. If I did not know his Miss Bloom he did not know the twins; I did, and I liked them better and better every time I met them.

I am afraid I have a spice of the gambler in me. It runs in the blood. My father never backed a horse nor touched a card in his life, but my grandfather had gambled away all the unentailed estate, a good third of the whole. I fancy I caught the intermittent fever from him. The hereditary craving had jumped my father and lit on me.

I found the Bertrams on for anything and everything in the way of a game, from pitch and toss to manslaughter. They were delightful losers and winners. Though they preferred small stakes, they did not shirk big ones, and were always ready for a "double or quits," no matter what the amount.

Their courage was its own reward. Bridge was the game we played, and as a rule they played together. As partners they were invincible. It was not so much good cards or even good play that did it. They were pretty good players no doubt, though very erratic. But I can say without vanity that I played as well as either of them, and Tom Staunton, who was usually my partner in a succession of challenge matches, was by long odds the best

player of the lot. Yet over and over again the twins pulled off the rubber against our strong cards. Their hands seemed to fit in wonderfully and their leads and finesses almost always came off. That was one of the reasons I wanted Beck so badly. He was a demon at bridge, and I was anxious to show the twins what we two could do together.

Now and then we were as much together as ever, but I never spoke of the Bertrams, for I was not sure how he would take it. One day he suddenly broached the subject himself. I believe he had got me up to his room on pretense of a drink really to talk about them.

"Your twins are a fraud, Kirwood," he said abruptly, after he had propitiated me with a long glass of iced cider cup.

"I never knew such a prejudiced chap as you are when you take a notion into your head."

"You said the same, old chap, about Maxwell, you may remember. No, I'll admit that's not fair; because I was right once is no reason why I should be right all the time. I'll give you my reason for the faith that is in me and you shall judge for yourself. You told me the Bertrams could not row?"

"I never saw two more complete duffers in a boat."

"Sure it wasn't a sham?"

"My dear boy, I don't know what maggot has got into your head. People don't risk their lives for the fun of the thing. There were never two chaps nearer drowning who didn't go the whole way."

"All right. Now I'll tell you my story. Two days ago as I was lazing down by the riverbank a couple of miles outside the town I saw the Bertrams go by in a two-oared outrigger. They knew how to row then and no mistake about it; I never saw two fellows pull cleaner together. I promise you they made the boat go."

"They may have learned to row since."

"All right. They were apt scholars if they did, that's all. But easy awhile;

I've more to tell. They went round the bend in a flash. I ducked as they went by and I'm pretty sure they didn't see me. I was more than a bit puzzled, as you may imagine, remembering what you had told me. As you know, I have detective blood in my veins. The result is an intolerable curiosity; I simply can't bear to be puzzled about anything without trying to find out. Quick as I could I got back to the boat slip, and I stole up the river after them in a canoe, keeping close in to the bank and reconnoitering at every bend. I had my reward. As I came to the sudden turn—you know the place where the river deepens—just beyond a sharp curve I heard splashing and shouting and laughing. They were having a good time. I ran the canoe's nose into the bank and crept round the bend under the trees. There right in front of me, not fifty yards off, were the Bertram twins, whom you saved from drowning a fortnight ago, swimming and diving like ducks."

"They may have learned to swim since," I said feebly.

"Don't be a fool, Charley; you don't learn to swim in a fortnight—not as they swam. It was a trick they played on you; I feel it in my bones. They wanted to get in with you and your set. Perhaps they thought it might lead to a little profitable card playing."

He looked at me pretty sharply as he said this, but I gave no sign. I knew it would confirm his prejudice if I even hinted about card playing.

"An idle, lazy brace of plausible scoundrels, that's what they are," he went on; "you may take my word for it. They are not the class for you, Kirwood. They simply loaf about all day and gamble all night. They shirk their lectures; by all accounts they do no private reading and—"

There I cut him short. "That's wrong, anyhow," I broke in—"as I happen to know."

"What do you know?"

"That they work. Perhaps they don't want the name of study. It's foolish, I grant you, but lots of clever fellows are like that. They study all

the same. How do I know? I see the question in your eyes. Wait a bit and I'll tell you how I know. A few days ago I went up to their room when I wasn't expected, and through the door I could hear the pair of them hard at work inside. I could not catch the words, but I'll swear it was question and answer repeated over again and again. One of them was grinding the other. They were so engaged that they did not hear when I knocked, so I turned the handle of the door and went in straight and caught them in the act. One of them had a notebook in his hand and he was questioning the other out of it. You never in your life saw two fellows more flabbergasted than they were when I suddenly appeared. At first I thought they were going to be nasty about it. 'What the devil do you mean—' the twin with the notebook broke out, when the other kicked him on the shins and brought him up standing. 'Easy does it, Fred,' he said, winking at me. 'Kirwood won't give away our little secret—not that it matters much if he did.' 'Beg pardon, Kirwood,' interrupted the other, as he locked the notebook away in his desk; 'you startled me when you came in so suddenly just now. Ed and I are a brace of fools. We have our doubts if we shall get through our little go. I hope you haven't come to tempt us from the straight path of duty. You don't mean to say you want cards at this hour of the day, you gluttonous gambler!'"

I did not intend to mention cards; it just slipped out. Beck caught me up at once.

"Cards! Did you say cards? Then I was right."

"No, you were wrong," I retorted. "I didn't want them to play cards. I wanted them to arrange about this evening at their place; I had forgotten the hour."

"But this evening means cards?"

"Well, I don't say it doesn't. We may have a modest little flutter after supper, I fancy."

Beck came close up to me and put a hand on my arm, the way a fellow holds another from some danger.

"Kirwood," he said, "you and I have been good pals for a long time; will you do something to please me?"

"Anything in my power, old man."

"Throw over the Bertram twins. I am a bad hand at preaching, but you told me yourself that card playing is to you what drink is to another man. If you begin you cannot stop; if you get in you cannot get out. Don't get in; don't let those chaps coax you in."

I was stirred by his earnestness. I felt bound to tell him everything after that, though I did not like to do it, not one little bit.

"I'm awfully obliged, old man," I said; "I really am. But it's past praying for. I'm 'in it,' as you say—pretty deep, too, I'm afraid; and I must try and get my money back."

Beck pulled up sharp. Not another word did he say about dropping cards or twins.

"How much?" he asked shortly.

"About six hundred. That is to say, there are I O U's for six hundred, not to speak of the ready money that is gone the way of all flesh."

"I could lend you a thousand without any trouble. It would only mean a line home. They let me have what money I want. They are rich; I'm the only one, you understand, and they live very quietly. Say the word and you can have the money the day after tomorrow."

"Thanks, old chap; I'm not down to that yet."

"I mean as a loan, of course."

"The security, my luck at cards; I have no other to offer. Oh, hang it all, Beck, I don't mean to be nasty. It was very good of you to offer, but you see yourself I cannot take the money from a friend."

"I see," said Beck reluctantly.

"I don't want to ask the governor," I went on. "He is not flush at present—indeed, he never is. So the only chance is to get it back from the twins. There's a chap in Shakespeare—Bassanio, I think—who says:

"When I had lost one shaft
I shot his fellow of the selfsame flight
The selfsame way with more advised watch

To find the other forth, and by adventuring
both
I oft found both.

"I liked the notion, so I got the lines by heart. That's exactly what I am going to do tonight. I mean to have my I O U's back from the twins or perish in the attempt. If you were a decent fellow you would lend me a hand."

"All right, I will."

I was never more taken aback in my life. "Do you really mean it?" I asked. "Don't come if you don't care to."

"I really mean it. Can you take me to the wine in their rooms?"

"Of course I can. They have often asked me to bring you along. You needn't shake your head in that fashion; they are as decent a pair of chaps as ever stepped. It was I that made the pace so hot, not they, and it was not their fault that they won."

"Have it your own way. I'll come with you tonight and judge for myself."

As I had promised, Beck had a hearty welcome from the twins. I could see that he was surprised at their rooms. From the colored prints on the wall to the turkey carpet on the floor everything was the best, and the best taste as well. There were five of us in the party including Tom Staunton. The supper was perfect and the wine and cigars. The twins did the thing in style. After supper they got to the piano and sang us a rattling good comic duet that would have made their fortune at one of the halls.

It was I that suggested cards; they objected.

"Let the cards slide for tonight, Kirwood, and give us a song. There will be lots of chances when your luck has turned. Of course if you insist you must have your revenge."

"I've Beck here tonight. I may not catch him again in a hurry."

"I'll stand out," said Tom Staunton.

"No, I did not mean that. We'll cut, of course."

"I know you did not mean it, old man," said Staunton good-humoredly, "but I'd rather not play—I really would. I don't play for anything like big stakes, cannot afford it, and should only spoil

your game. I'll drink and smoke and look on; I'm a first class looker-on."

"Then Beck and I challenge you," I said to the twins. "Cut for deal." And so we settled steadily down to work.

Beck got the deal and went "no trumps" on strong hearts, diamonds and spades, but third hand doubled. His partner led clubs and they got two tricks. After a hard struggle we pulled off the second game by Beck's consummate play, but they took the third and rubber.

At five-shilling points forty-seven pounds were added to the stack of my I O U's already in their possession. I noticed with surprise that Beck, who prided himself on being a ready money man, also paid with an I O U.

The next rubber they won right off the reel. Then our luck had a turn after a hard fight. At "a game all" Beck dealt himself four aces, scored the little slam and pulled off a big rubber. So the tide of success ebbed and flowed all through the night. At one time we were over seven hundred pounds out, when again our luck took a turn.

Toward the end Beck played in an extraordinary fashion in defiance of all the rules. He seemed now and again, by a kind of second sight, to divine what was in our opponent's hands, and successfully perpetrated some audacious finesses. After one of those startling successes he leaned back his chair and whispered something to Staunton, who sat right behind him. Tom at first looked surprised as he glanced from one twin to the other, then he smiled and nodded and watched the game more closely than before.

The gray light of dawn was oozing in through the cracks in the shutters when the party broke up, and Beck and myself were just two hundred and seventy each to the bad on the night.

"Sorry I let you in for this, old man," I said to him as we mixed a small whiskey and soda and lit a last cigar.

"All right," he answered cheerily; "better luck next time."

At this the gambler in me exulted.

I had not hoped that Beck would go in for another try. As gamblers will, I made sure of luck next time.

"Can you give us our revenge tomorrow night at my place?" I asked.

"Give it to you here instead; don't want to change our luck," laughed one of the twins.

Now I did want to change the luck. I was a great believer in luck and I would have held out for our turn, but Beck gave me away.

"More comfortable here," he cut in. "The best of everything is good enough for the likes of us, Kirwood, and by Jove, these fellows give the best. Staunton will come, too, just to see fair play."

At this one of the twins turned sharp round with an angry gesture. "Do you mean to suggest—" he began hotly, but broke off at the sight of Beck's smiling face.

"Of course Staunton can come if he will; only too delighted to have him."

"Thanks awfully, old man," said Staunton, to whom bridge for its own sake, not for the stakes, was the business of life. "I shall be delighted. I don't think I ever watched more interesting play. I hope to pick up a few useful hints tomorrow night. Thanks awfully."

We played a half-dozen times after that, Staunton looking on, and Beck and myself lost steadily.

I was surprised next day to see Beck and Staunton in close conversation. They were not very congenial, as a rule.

We met earlier than usual that night, and sat down at once after supper to cards. Beck handed a notebook over his shoulder to Staunton.

"Keep note as I told you," he enjoined.

"All right," Staunton replied.

"New kind of marker?" asked one of the twins, looking up from shuffling the pack.

"Well, yes," said Beck, "a new kind of marker."

"Your own invention?"

"Not exactly. A notion I picked up from watching the play. But I think it is rather a smart dodge, and I want Staunton to test it. He is the 'intelli-

gent bystander,' you know, tonight—kind of general umpire. I'll have his opinion later on. Cut. Seven, nine, king, ace—my deal. First blood to us, anyway, Kirwood; perhaps the luck is going to turn, after all."

But it didn't. It wasn't the cards; on the whole we held the better cards. But the twins played into each other's hands in a way that I never saw equaled. Beck and I were, I think I have said, a strong combination. But we were nothing to them; there seemed to be positive inspiration in the way they declared and doubled. Their finesses almost invariably came off. Each found what he wanted in the other hand. Now and again, of course, Beck and I had a turn, but on the whole the tide ran steadily against us.

At about half past two in the morning we were each about three hundred pounds out. The other side were a game up; it was their deal.

"Partner, you make a trump," said the dealer. His partner declared hearts, and put down four hearts with practically nothing else except two knaves and a queen in his hand. To my amazement, Beck, who was third player, instead of playing put his cards down flat on the table.

"I think we have had about enough of this," he remarked very quietly.

"All right," said the dealer; "when we finish this rubber we'll stop. Luck is against you tonight. You can have your revenge when you like."

"Thanks," said Beck, quietly as before. "I'll have my revenge here and now. How does that marker work, Staunton?"

"Like a charm," Staunton said, with a curious thrill of excitement in his voice that I had never noticed before. "Right every time."

"Don't bother about markers, Beck," I cried irritably; "let us get on with the game like a good chap."

"Just one moment, if you don't mind; this is really very interesting." He took what he called the marker from Staunton's hand and showed it to me. This is what I saw, clear letters on a single sheet of paper:

DECLARATION

"With you" Poor hand.
 "Leave it" Poor hand. Strong spades.
 "I leave it" Poor hand. Strong clubs.
 "I leave it to you."
 Poor hand. Strong diamonds.
 "I leave it to you, partner."
 Poor hand. Strong hearts.
 "Make a trump" Good all-round hand.
 "You make a trump."
 Good hand. Strong spades.
 "Partner, make a trump."
 Good hand. Strong clubs.
 "Make a trump, partner."
 Good hand. Strong diamonds.
 "Partner, you make a trump."
 Good hand. Strong hearts.

DOUBLING

Leader

"May I?" Have nothing.
 "May I play?" Strong spades only.
 "Partner, may I play?" Strong clubs only.
 "May I play, partner?" Strong diamonds only.
 "Partner, may I play to—" Strong hearts only.

Third hand

"Double" Want spades led.
 "I double" Want clubs.
 "Partner, I double" Want diamonds.
 "I double, partner" Want hearts.

I suppose I was a bit dense, but for the moment I did not in the least realize what the thing meant. My mind was on the hand I was going to play.

"I can make nothing of it," I cried impatiently.

"Perhaps our hosts can help," said Beck, still dangerously quiet. He held the paper to them and they looked at it, first one, then the other.

I was amazed at the result. The blood rushed into their dark cheeks and ebbed as quickly, leaving them a sickly yellow. Their black eyes blazed; their faces were contorted with passion. Both leaped to their feet sending their chairs back with a crash, and one of them snatched furiously at the paper in Beck's hand.

But Beck was too quick for him. "You may look but mustn't touch," he cried, shifting the paper dexterously to the other hand.

Then all of a sudden one of the twins broke out in a perfect frenzy of passion.

"You low sneak!" he shouted. "You contemptible spy! You have been rummaging in my desk and—"

He pulled himself up with a jerk, like a horse in mad gallop suddenly flung back on its haunches.

I was watching Beck at the time. I did not think he'd stand this kind of talk. I expected a row and I was ready to join in. But I surprised a sudden flash of triumph in his eyes.

"Thank you, thank you," he said mockingly, "but you are quite mistaken. I have not seen that code of yours yet. I made this up out of my own head by the simple process of watching your game and putting two and two together. Staunton, will you kindly explain to Kirwood; he is looking as bewildered as a duck in a thunder storm."

"It means this," said Staunton in his slow and stolid way: "these two—gentlemen"—he dwelt on the word with elaborate emphasis—"have arranged a code of signals. Beck here discovered it by watching the fall of the cards. He made up a code of signals from their play; I've tested it tonight and it comes right every time."

"It's a lie!" screamed the twins together.

"We'll soon see," snapped out Beck sharply. His surface politeness was gone; the fighter was roused in him at last. "I mean to have a look at that desk."

With a cry one of them sprang between him and the desk. But again Beck was too quick for him. A sharp movement of the hand and foot, a trip and a push, and the twin was over on the carpet with Beck on top of him.

"Look to the other chap," he cried to me over his shoulder, holding his man down.

The "other chap" jumped for the sideboard, and his fingers were closing on the handle of a carving knife when I struck him sharply with the edge of my hand on the forearm and he dropped the knife with a cry of pain. There was a short struggle. He was fierce and active as a wildcat. As he waltzed with me round and round the room he made a desperate effort to kick Beck off his brother. Tables and chairs were thrown about and the floor was flooded with cards. But in a moment Staunton came to my aid, and between us we mastered him.

"Tie him wrists and ankles," panted Beck. "Your pocket handkerchiefs. Look alive! Then give me a hand with my chap; he's a bit restive."

I heard the dull bump of a head on the carpet as Beck got his twin down again on his back while Staunton and I were at work on the other. We knotted the handkerchiefs tight on wrist and ankle, and presently in spite of their struggles we had the brace of twins securely bound lying side by side on the carpet.

"Now for the desk!" sang out Beck. "Hand me that knife, Staunton, like a good chap."

He thrust the pointed blade of the knife right in to the handle under the lid of the desk, then with a sudden twist of his wrist he burst the lock open.

He found what he wanted almost at once.

"Look, Staunton! Look, Kirwood!" he cried exultingly. "It's almost the same as my own code, only more elaborate. Devilish clever! This was the paper our friends were studying for the 'little go,' Kirwood when you broke in on them. A very interesting document which I will keep for further reference."

He thrust it into an inner pocket, while the unmasked scoundrels writhed on the floor in impotent rage.

"Halloo, halloo!" cried Beck, still rummaging in the desk. "What have we here? A big batch of I O U's, our own and others. We were not the only victims, Kirwood. I'll make a clean sweep of the lot."

He gathered from the desk a double handful of I O U's written on all sorts of scraps of paper, swept up the two little heaps from the night's play that still lay on the card table and piled the lot into the empty grate.

"A match, Staunton."

The little red points of flame crept in and out among the loosely piled scraps of paper. They smoldered for a moment and burst into a blaze.

"Feels like burning banknotes," said Beck. "Two or three thousand pounds' worth of good paper gone in a flash."

He grew suddenly serious as he turned from the fire.

"What are we going to do with those two chaps?" he asked. "That requires some thinking over."

So we three in the dead waste and middle of the night sat in judgment on the twins who lay on the floor watching us silently. They had made no move and said no word from the moment they were overpowered.

To my surprise, stolid, good-natured Tom Staunton was the sternest member of our court-martial. He was strongly for public exposure and ignominious expulsion. His devotion to bridge was I think the explanation. It was to him a kind of sacrilege to cheat at the great game. Beck took a milder view, and after a while I sided with Beck and Staunton was overruled.

"Listen, you chaps," said Beck, delivering the judgment of the court aloud, for we had consulted in whispers. "You are to leave this place for good—for good, remember—in three days at the outside. Do you understand?"

"We understand," they said in a

sullen whisper. Then we unbound and left them.

At the door we parted with Staunton, and Beck and I walked back in the moonlight to our rooms. He was silent, but in a curious way I felt he wanted me to say something and I was compelled to say it.

"Thanks, old man; I've had my lesson. I won't gamble again."

"What, never?"

"Well, hardly ever. Half-penny points or something of that kind."

The pressure of his hand as we parted pinned me to my promise.

Three days later the twins left the University. They "softly and silently vanished away" and were heard of no more. Several chaps in their set were no doubt agreeably surprised that their I O U's were never presented for payment.

"Anyhow, they won't trouble Miss Bloom any more," was Beck's comment.

"Tell me, Beck—" I began and stopped short.

After a pause he answered my unspoken question.

"Yes," he said, "I love Lucy Bloom."



ELUSION

By BEATRICE IRWIN

PARTED lips and breath of May,
Rushing stream, and reeds that sway.

Dreaming eyes, half veiled from sight,
Purple iris, lily white.

Slender body, drooping grass,
Bees and butterflies that pass.

Warmth and silence weave a spell.
Will she? Won't she? Who can tell?

ALL IN THE FAMILY

By WILLIAM WALLACE WHITELOCK

MR. OPDYKE VAN INGEN (*a large, optimistic animal, with small, pessimistic legs*)
MRS. OPDYKE VAN INGEN (*a good sport*)
THORNTON (*butler*)

SCENE—The living room of the Van Ingens' "cottage" Idlewild at Tuxedo. Lavish display of comfortable crudity.

TIME—Eight P.M. The room is garishly illuminated by electricity. Enter MR. and MRS. VAN INGEN in automobile costume, followed by THORNTON.

MR. VAN INGEN (*taking off fur coat and handing it to THORNTON*)—Whew! I thought we'd never get home. Quick, a highball, Thornton. Will you have one, my dear?

MRS. VAN INGEN (*shedding garments*)—No—o. I think I'll have a cream dee mint frappy. You'd better bring the bottle, Thornton.

THORNTON—Very well, madam.

(THORNTON goes off with coats.)

MR. V. I. (*removing goggles and cap*)—That's the way with these automobiles—you never know when the bottom's going to drop out of 'em.

MRS. V. I.—Like stocks.

MR. V. I.—Ahem! Unless you're on the inside.

MRS. V. I.—But that's the very worst place to be when the drop comes. The machine goes over you.

MR. V. I. (*smiling in superior manner*)—Or you go over the other fellow. Just you wait, girly, till you see what I pull off this time. (*Sits on sofa and puts up legs.*)

MRS. V. I.—And just you wait, laddie, till you see what I pull off. (*Sits on other sofa, puts up leg and takes out cigarette case, from which she chooses cigarette.*)

MR. V. I. (*severely*)—Have you been going into that game again?

MRS. V. I. (*blowing rings of smoke*)—Just a little flyer, my dear. Merely to keep my hand in.

MR. V. I.—How often must I tell you that as an outsider you don't stand the ghost of a chance? Now, with me—

MRS. V. I.—It's different—you don't stand even the ghost—

MR. V. I. (*rising petulantly*)—Nonsense! You know I'm on the inside; I'm one of the men who swing things. Yet you persist in going ahead without consulting me, just as though I wasn't there.

MRS. V. I.—You weren't there on United Worsted, were you? There, there, I apologize! I know it was five years ago, and since then you've got 'em on the run, and they don't dare try any monkeyshines for you're one of the powers in the Street. Just the same, Opdyke, a little bird's been telling me—

MR. V. I. (*his ill humor going off in a laugh*)—You and your little birds! One of them'll land you in the poorhouse yet.

MRS. V. I.—From which, I suppose, you won't turn a hand to rescue me?

MR. V. I. (*dramatically*)—Not I! I shall say to you: "Your blood be on your own head. I warned you and you refused to listen."

MRS. V. I. (*in mock tragic tone*)—You are cruel, cruel, my husband! But wait; when the chariot goes over you—

MR. V. I. (*laughing*)—Over me! When that day comes the mosquitoes will sing at the Metropolitan in January. (THORNTON *enters with tray*.) Ah, there you are, Thornton. Put it down here. Hasn't the Wall Street edition come yet?

THORNTON—It came just as I was leaving the pantry, sir. I'll bring it in immediately.

MR. V. I.—Yes, do, right away. (THORNTON *goes off*. MR. V. I. *hands wife glass of crème de menthe*.) There, my dear, is your medicine. I drink to your success as a plunger.

MRS. V. I.—And I to yours as a member of the Old Guard. (*They drink*.)

MR. V. I. (*smacking lips*)—Ah, that tones up the general market! As I was saying, my dear—(Enter THORNTON *with newspaper*.)—Ah, there it is now! Quick, Thornton, let me have it! (*Seizes newspaper*. THORNTON *goes off*. MR. V. I. *turns to stock sales and runs his eye eagerly down columns*. Suddenly he catches sight of a heading on opposite page, and a groan issues from his lips.)

MRS. V. I. (*rising eagerly*)—What is it, Opdyke? What has happened?

MR. V. I. (*striving to speak*)—They—they—they've sold me out—unloaded ahead of time! Look!

MRS. V. I. (*seizing newspaper*)—Let me see! Where is it? (*Her eye falls on the column, and a sigh of relief escapes her*.)

MR. V. I.—Oh, the scoundrels! The traitors! They've broken faith with me! I'm ruined! I'm ruined!

MRS. V. I. (*fervently*)—Thank heaven!

MR. V. I.—What? You thank heaven that I'm ruined?

MRS. V. I.—No, no, I don't mean that. I mean thank heaven I gave orders to sell.

MR. V. I.—Oh!

MRS. V. I.—If you've lost, I've made. And be assured you shall never lack a seat at my table, Opdyke, a cot in my attic.

MR. V. I.—You're very kind, I'm sure—

THORNTON (*entering*)—Madam, dinner is served.

MR. V. I. (*pulling himself together*)—My dear, may I offer you my arm?

MRS. V. I. (*taking his arm*)—Thank you. By the way, Opdyke, if you're forced to sell Idlewild, pray let me have first chance at it. I'll give you more than an outsider would.

MR. V. I.—By all means, my dear. Perhaps also you would like to buy my trousers? I'll let you have them cheap—family discount, you know.



CONSISTENCY, thou art a jewel—the only one with which woman does not adorn herself.



SOMETIMES when the prodigal son returns he gets the fatted calf in the form of a roast.

NIGHT AT THE RIVER HOUSE

By R. K. WEEKES

THE room was large and low pitched, with lattice windows looking out to south and west; but these were closed now and curtained for the night. The walls were tinted Wedgewood blue; there was a grandfather's clock and a Dutch dresser, and above the high mantelpiece were ranged some willow pattern dishes, as well as a series of spirited river scenes in water color. The place was obviously an old cottage which had been taken over by people of taste.

The sole occupant of the room was kneeling before the open hearth, feeding the fire with sticks. She was a girl of five and twenty, with heavy dark brows and blue eyes under them, and a most obstinate chin. There was temper in the face and loyalty and self-will; one might predict that the owner would both love and hate with all her heart. After stirring the logs till the flames roared up the chimney amid a cloud of starry sparks, she went to the door and looked out. The house stood on an islet, close to the bank of a great river. A carriage-way connected it with the shore, but the gate commanding this bridge was closed, and red lamps hung there as danger signals. The night was so dark that one could see little except a line of mop-headed willows dim against the almost lightless sky, and here and there downstream the gleam of a window which cast a ladder of gold across the glossy black water.

Returning, the girl glanced round the room as though dissatisfied. She pushed close to the fire the larger of the two chintz-covered armchairs, removed from the seat a hat and coat—her own—and dropped them comfortably out of sight

behind the sofa. Tidiness was not a virtue of Ursula Charrington's. Next she went into the kitchen and came back to lay out on the table a dainty supper for two. She added a vase of November monthly roses, carmine-tinted, faint-scented, and then, her preparations complete, sat down in the second armchair and stared into the fire, propping her chin on her hands.

A sound outside made her start. Someone was looking in at her through the pane of glass let into the door.

Next moment the watcher entered, a tall man, slow moving, with tired eyes deeply set. He looked observantly round the room before he came forward to greet the girl, who was lying back with hands folded in her lap and a face utterly devoid of color and expression.

"I'm afraid you didn't expect to see me, Ursula."

She shook her head.

"Sorry, but I thought I'd better come. There'll be time to talk things over before he turns up."

"Before who turns up?" she asked with more animation.

"Why, Ainsworth. You fixed eight o'clock, didn't you? It's only seven now."

Ursula Charrington set her teeth on her underlip and looked steadily at her husband from under those black brows of hers. "You know, then," she said. "How do you know?"

"Why, you see, you wrote your wire to him by mistake on that duplicating pad of mine. I went there myself to write a business letter, and the thing simply stared me in the face—as you see."

He unfolded a sheet of paper, and Ur-

sula recognized an exact reproduction of the telegram she herself had sent off earlier in the day.

CAPTAIN AINSWORTH, BURFORD:

Eight o'clock at the River House.

URSULA.

Charrington refolded the document and put it away. He was the first to break the silence that followed. "If you don't mind sitting down, Ursula, I do rather want to talk this over," he said, himself taking the chair which she had designed for another man.

"I don't see what good it'll do."

"Oh, I don't know. I should like to know your plans. Ainsworth's motor-ing over, isn't he?"

"Who told you that? It wasn't in the wire."

"Oh, I—I Sherlocked it. But afterwards?"

"We are going to the Continent."

"I didn't mean that. I was thinking of the future."

She shrugged her shoulders. "I suppose you'll take the obvious course—and then we shall take the obvious course."

"Sure you can trust him?"

"Yes," said Ursula with some warmth, "I am."

"He's fond of you?"

"Really, Raymond, don't you think this discussion is rather indelicate?"

"Don't know; it's important. He is fond of you; I've seen it, poor devil! And are you fond of him?"

Ursula did not answer.

"I wish you'd tell me."

She glanced suggestively at the clock. "It's a quarter past seven."

"Three quarters of an hour before he's due."

"Do you intend to stay to meet him?"

"I may be here half an hour or so, I dare say."

"In that case I'll wait outside."

She sprang up and went to the door, but it would not open. "You can't get out," said Charrington in his matter-of-fact way. "I locked it when I came in, and the key's in my pocket."

Ursula returned to her chair. She had enough self-control to hold her tongue; but her fingers occupied them-

selves in tearing her handkerchief to ribbons. When it was thoroughly destroyed she rolled it into a ball and stuffed it into the fire. Charrington with an exclamation sprang up and snatched her hands away.

"Ursula! What on earth are you about?"

She looked at her burnt finger tips and suddenly laughed. "They hurt you more than they do me," she said with truth; for at that moment she was too angry to feel anything at all. Nevertheless, the senselessness of her action did in some measure restore her natural poise. Ursula was not without a sense of humor. She gathered up her wits to speak her mind.

"Look here, Ray; it's no use going on like this. I don't in the least know what you mean by coming here, nor whether you're heartbroken at my leaving you, or shocked, or merely annoyed. But I don't mind explaining my motives, and then perhaps you'll condescend to enlighten me as to yours. We've been married over a year now, haven't we? And we've done nothing but quarrel all the time. I don't know whether the fault's mine or yours. I know you're simply maddening with your silences and your—your cast-iron habit of issuing your orders and taking your own way; but I dare say I'm trying, too, and I know, because you told me so this morning, that I have the devil of a temper—"

"Are you going because I said that?"

"No, I'm not. Oh, I was very angry at the time, I don't deny it; but I didn't make up my mind to go until I was cool and had thought things over. But you know we really do nothing but have rows and it's perfectly miserable. You'll get to hate me soon, I'm sure, and—and—oh, it's horrid altogether! I'm sure it's much better to end it. It will be unpleasant for a time, but then we can both start fresh. There are heaps of nice girls who'd really make you happy—girls ever so much nicer than I am. Don't you think it'll be better so?"

Charrington was standing with his arm along the mantel shelf. The fire-light showed his tired eyes and the lines of habitual melancholy round his mouth.

He was rarely angry; but his silent opposition, his habit of taking his own way regardless of her, these things were far more maddening to Ursula than storms such as her own. They were always at cross-purposes; when he tried to be kind he succeeded most surely in exasperating her. At this moment, when he stood giving no answer, grinding his heel into the logs with the deliberation that characterized all his movements, even at this moment she was itching to box his ears.

"Well?" she said at last.

"I don't want you to go, you know."

"It stings your pride?"

"I don't like it."

"I'm sorry, but I'm going."

"No."

"But I am," she insisted, with rising anger.

Charrington sighed. "I'm an ass at explaining things," he said, and paused and began again. "Look now, Ursula. I'm not thinking of myself, honestly I'm not; it's for your sake I don't want you to do it, old girl. You're too good for—for this sort of thing. I know. You wouldn't be happy. Even if other people passed it over and forgot it—and the best sort don't—you'd never forget it yourself. You say you've been miserable with me; but you'd be a hundred times worse off in that sort of life. I can't imagine why you ever thought of doing it. If I didn't know it was impossible I should say you were doing it not for your own sake but for somebody else's. I suppose Ainsworth must have got round you and made you promise. But I'll be damned if I let you keep your word!"

She stared at him. "But you can't prevent me," she said. "You may keep me here locked up till Hugh comes, but after that what can you do?"

"I said I would be damned before I let you go."

"Well, you needn't repeat it; I'm not so fond of the word."

"But I meant it literally."

She gazed at him blankly.

"Your bridge is pretty rotten, isn't it?" Charrington proceeded in his laborious way. "Yes, it's so rotten that you've got a notice board up warning

foot passengers not to cross too many at a time. And you've got the gate shut and the danger lamps lighted to prevent Ainsworth blundering onto it in his car. Well, I've opened the gate and put out the lamps."

Ursula was on her feet clutching the mantelpiece. "But if he does go on it—"

"He'll go through into the water."

"But it's—murder!"

"I told you I'd be damned first."

Without an instant's warning Ursula made a dart at the nearest window. She was halfway through the lattice before Charrington caught her; but he did catch her, and he dragged her back in spite of her struggles. Through the open window a church clock chimed the half-hour.

"Let me go," said Ursula. She was so dangerously white that Charrington obeyed.

"Ursula," he said tentatively, "Ursula, if you'll only give me your word I'll shut the gate directly."

"I won't give you my word."

"But what can you do?"

"Sit here, I suppose, as you have me under lock and key. It's possible that Hugh mayn't be drowned. But in any case I won't give you my word—never, never!"

She threw herself back in her chair, her lips set, her eyes brilliant, her cheeks burning with a color that matched the roses on the table. Charrington had not anticipated this. He had never learned that force applied to Ursula made her tenfold more set on having her own way. There was no perversity in his own character, only an unyielding resolution; and he could not understand an obstinacy that was neither reasonable nor profitable.

He knew the house well enough to be certain that her only chance of escape was through the windows behind him, and consequently he had set his chair so as to command those. The kitchen, which opened on Ursula's right, had only one window, and that was efficiently barred. He thought her case hopeless, and believed that she had given up hope, that it was a duel between their

wills, not their wits; but he was mistaken. Ursula was turning over a hundred plans of escape. She had twice her husband's quickness, though he had twice her strength.

Presently she began to fan herself with a book. The fire was giving out a fierce heat, and Charrington was not surprised to see her move her chair back. This brought her close to the door of the kitchen, but of that he took no heed, knowing that she could not escape that way. Nor did she seem to entertain the idea. For presently she drew her chair further back still, till it touched the door of the house, the key of which rested safely in Charrington's waistcoat pocket. She leaned her cheek against the hinges as though to feel the cool air.

"Would you like the window open?" said Charrington.

"If you please."

He rose to obey. As he undid the catch he heard a click and turned to see the door wide open. The key of the kitchen fitted both locks. He ran at her; she flung her chair in his face and was out and away.

Charrington made straight for the bridge and there halted, listening. What did he hear? Not footsteps flying before him down the road, but a faint unmistakable rustle behind, on the island. Ursula had meant him to follow an imaginary wife across the marshes while she herself waited only till he was out of earshot to slip across the bridge and hide. But Charrington was not to be outwitted a second time. He took his stand in the middle of the bridge. So long as he remained there she was as securely a prisoner as she had been in the parlor, though in a larger prison.

The night was so dark that they could see no more than if they had been down a mine. Charrington, who had very acute hearing, became aware of a series of tiny sounds away on his right, but he was not to be enticed away from his post. "I sha'n't stir from the bridge, Ursula, whatever you do," he said aloud, whereupon the sounds ceased directly. Dead silence succeeded. Then some moments later he heard noises again. But these

were not mock soft, meant to be heard; they were so faint that no one but he would have been able to hear them. Ursula was creeping down to the water's edge, intending to swim across.

Charrington did not know what to do. Ursula was a poor swimmer; suppose she were drowned before he could rescue her? Was anything worth that risk? He could not locate the sounds, they were too slight; and to lose her in that darkness—

From up the river came the throbbing of an approaching steamer.

She sailed round the point, jeweled with lights gold and green and crimson flaring over the dark water, sparkling under her cloud of luminous smoke. Behind her the white frothy wake spread wide, and beside her every jetty wavelet was rimmed with gold. On she surged, sending the water slap-slap against the stone embankments that lined the shore. The house stood out black against the glow of her, the line of willow trees, the bridge—ah, and that dark figure crouching down among the reeds! Charrington had vowed to stay at his post, but not in the light—no. He sprang forward and caught her in his arms before she could free her feet from the mire and the sedges. Ursula gave a cry, the first she had uttered, and struggled so fiercely that she almost dragged him into the water. But Charrington wound his arms round her and pinioned hers to her sides so that she could not stir; and there in the darkness among the reeds he kissed her—kissed her as he had never dared to do, not even on her wedding day.

When he came to himself, shamed and sober, the great steamer was far off down the river, though the waves of her passage were still rustling and whispering among the rushes at their feet.

"I beg your pardon, Ursula."

There was no answer for a time; then she said, in a faint cold voice: "Since you're sorry, of course you'll let me go."

"No."

"What, after this—after insulting me? You *still* won't let me free?"

"No. Never."

A shudder ran through her. They

stood in silence, gazing toward the invisible road. Again the distant clock chimed—eight this time.

Far across the marshes rose and swelled the banshee wail of an approaching car. Ursula stirred in her husband's arms, and he, cool and resolute, put his hand over her lips. Two brilliant eyes of fire shot into view and came racing along the level road straight toward them. Larger they grew and more dazzling; in their vivid incandescence the mire and ruts were blanched as white as salt. Were they a hundred yards away? Were they fifty? No; the gateposts of the bridge started up in black against the glare; the car was upon them—and suddenly Ainsworth jammed on the brakes and brought her to a stand.

Perhaps he mistrusted the marsh bridges; perhaps he was uncertain of his way; the watchers could not tell. Charrington was shaking violently; his arms had relaxed, but Ursula made no attempt to escape. Ainsworth jumped down and looked to the car, and then came across the bridge, shading his eyes from the lights in the cottage windows.

They heard his voice inside the house, calling, "Ursula! Ursula!" Again he came out and made the tour of the island, still calling. He passed so close that Charrington could have touched him, then went into the house a second time.

Charrington moved, but it was only to look down at his wife. She tilted back her head and answered with a smile.

"Shall we—*can* we—ask him to supper, Ray?"

"We? *We* ask him, Ursula?"

He stumbled over the words, incoherent, unintelligible. Suddenly warm arms were round his neck, warm lips against his cheek.

"Oh, you duffer—never to tell me before that you loved me! Oh, Ray! Thank heaven with me that he didn't cross the bridge. It would have been murder, but I know I shouldn't have given in. I love you, I love you, but—"

"But," supplemented Charrington with an uncertain laugh, as his arms tightened round her, "but, you know, old girl, you *have* a devil of a temper!"



"WERE you out at the poker game last night?"

"Yes—five hundred."



CHARLEY WISEBOY—What would you give to be single again?

HENRY HENPECK—My wife.



LOVE is a game you should keep out of unless you are a good loser.

ATTAR OF ROSES

By CHARLTON LAWRENCE EDHOLM

YOUR songs with fragrant summer fill the room,
So like that rich and languorous perfume
Whose every drop contains an Orient,
Contains a Sultan's garden full of bloom.

They crush the petals, and a drop remains
Of sweet, that coursed in million roses' veins.
The Sultan's roses gave their treasure up;
'Tis that, my love, your em'rald vial contains.

Your first shy glance, so long ago, so long,
Your panting kiss last night—what mem'ries throng!
And such the roses, pale and red, whose breath
Of summer fragrance greets you in my song.

Today I saw how two did lead one, blind,
But yesterday a youth of gladsome mind.
Who knows when Fate turn frowning face to us,
Oh, friend? Enjoy, enjoy while Fate is kind!

Mine are the myriad flowers that bloom today;
Mine are the lilies pale, the tulips gay,
The violet, the jasmine and the rose,
But lost to me the bloom of yester May.

And lost for me the bud with rip'ning lip
All close about her virgin sweets; when sip
The bees of summer from her lavished store,
Then Time will hold me in his bony grip.

My love is mine, so let my love suffice,
And cease your sermons of vain sacrifice.
Would he who has a Paradise on earth
Exchange it for a promised Paradise?

I'd fill my life so full with life that I
A thousand years in my cool grave may lie,
Content to dream of lips of maids and cups,
The wine and kisses of the years gone by.

THE WOMAN IN THE SEA

By HERMAN SCHEFFAUER

"SHE is more than woman," said a voice in the darkness, "and it may be less—some strange, savage queen of a barbaric tribe. She is strong and silent, too—perhaps only half human. I think she might be very cruel."

"But she is very beautiful," said another voice, "and I feel she is very good."

The two voices, which were those of men, spoke on in the darkness. The eye was able to seize only upon the faint outlines of mighty mountain crests surrounding this region of ragged, sea-torn bluffs. The great stars were splendid overhead. Mingled with the two disembodied voices the moving of a light wind in the vegetation came to the ear, and from far down, somewhere in the dark, the sullen mutter of the surf. The red spark of a cigar glowed, and for an instant a strong masculine face flared in vermilion against the night. Even now the dagger-like rays of the stars were being dulled and the eastern heavens were bleaching into gray.

Then, from across the waters, dawn soared over the mountains of San Bernardino and embraced the Pacific like a prelude to the mighty movement of the day. Catalina erected herself out of the night and the sea, her cliffs and crags crowned with mist, and grandly awaited the sun. The Bay of Avalon bared the white scimiter of its curving sands in the pearl ghost light of the new day.

The forms of the two men seated on boulders upon the loftiest outer sea cliff, emerged from the darkness. Not far away lay a third, face down. He was an island guide, asleep. Close by was a dead wild goat, stiff and shaggy,

and a rifle resting upon it told the manner of its death. The sun broke suddenly from the mountains on the mainland, and the colossal shadows of the island peaks were cast upon the waters to the west.

The weary men had been hunting in the hills since the day before. They were waiting for the dawn before descending into the town of Avalon. The older man was tall, stern and meager; his nose was aquiline and his eyes black and keen. He spoke, pointing to the town:

"Smoke is rising from the hotel. Let us go down."

"This is wonderful, Hector," said the other. "I'm glad now that I came."

His soft blue eyes were bent upon the horizon where the sun streamed across the sea. Far out a ship with sails full set went by, her canvas gleaming like pearl. The second and younger speaker was bearded; his face and demeanor bespoke the artist. Every feature suggested the sensitive organization of the dreamer. He was Jerome Kasman, painter of landscapes. The other was his older brother Hector, an officer of artillery at the Presidio at San Francisco.

"I must paint the bay and the rocks from here," added Jerome.

They awoke the guide, who shouldered the quarry, and the three went down the mountain trails to the peaceful town on the beach.

Into the glory of that very morning Julia Grove looked forth from her chamber in the Avalon Inn. She was still abed; the night for her had been sleepless. She watched the awakening of the

world, the mountains grow from black to purple, from purple to lilac and emerald. The highest crag along the ramparts of the bay stood centered in her window like a brilliant painting in a frame. Two human figures on that peak were outlined against the sky. That morning the soul of Julia Grove stood as sharp and as separate against the background of her years as those two shapes against the heavens. Her mind was filled with an oppression of strange thought.

When dawn broke upon the world she felt that the world was terrible with revelation. It was the purest and the holiest part of day. The face of the earth had been hidden in night, cleansed of stains and sanctified by starlight, and in its aspect was again something of the ancient innocence. The stars were dead and the sun was not yet born, and human lives lay asleep upon the hemisphere; all was detached, silent, strange, as if the earth had just been made anew.

Julia's soul was awed and hushed and humbled. The island of Santa Catalina was but a speck in the sea, and she felt herself as a speck upon that speck. Pride fell from her spirit like a poisoned robe. It was as if she heard the solemn and remote echoes of mighty voices calling from the earth, the sea and the sky above. At last the day came like an archangel with a sword of flame.

Yet when the party from the hotel met at the landing to go out on the bay in one of the glass-bottomed boats, she was again serene, impassive, self-contained. She felt the fine and ardent eyes of Jerome Kasman bent upon her, and knew what a tumult was in his heart. She felt, too, the iron indifference which shut in, like the walls of a fortress, the inmost soul of his older brother—an indifference which seemed to her both challenge and affront. Her thirty-three years of life had all been triumphant years.

Tall and full of feminine strength, she sat in the boat as stately as a Valkyrie on her stallion, her head erect, her brown eyes full of a thousand thoughts, bright as the sea. The wind made her face live the more by fluttering the stray hair about her neck and temples. A sweet,

unfathomable smile in which dwelt a wonderful wisdom, flickered upon her lips. Her arms, superb and round, showed bare to the elbow. She sat beneath her red parasol like some goddess of the sea in the crimson glow of a burning sunset.

"How poor and trivial," thought the artist, "seem the three other women of the party! Meek and helpless creatures, frail as linnets with timid hearts. But she was the woman triumphant, all Mother Nature behind her; she was the tigress-vestal, her heart of fire fenced about with an invincible purity, like a volcano covered with snow. Her power of inspiring love in man seemed almost like a law.

But when this woman glanced into the eyes of Hector Kasman, into those chill and agate depths, and realized the heart of adamant and will of steel within him, then the great misgiving of the dawn possessed her once more. He was a man immune, immune as these cliffs to the sea. Nay, he had even strength to give to others, for she had swiftly perceived his intention of guarding his younger brother from the perilous pit of infatuation to which Jerome's romantic heart irresistibly led him. Hector was determined that Jerome should not wreck his great career. He must be consecrated to Art, and Woman should be only a theme for his art. Year after year with a jealous and untiring care Hector had watched over his brother, had shielded him from endless emotional temptations, had forced him steadily toward the great goal the future held for this man gifted of the gods. Long ago Hector had realized that love was the greatest danger for Jerome, that it meant, indeed, a complete wreck of his ambition and an abandonment of his art, not perhaps so much to the emotion of any *grande passion* that might fasten itself upon the painter, as to the overwhelming despair that would certainly result from the equally certain disillusion. Thus Julia had felt this indirect challenge and affront as well as the officer's indifference.

Jeffreys, the old boatman, rowed them to the deep, pellucid waters at the base

of the cliffs. The ocean was glassy; the sun blazed upon the surface, and the sharp indigo shadow of the boat and the oars moved over the white sands at the bottom like the shadow of a bird across a sunny meadow, or like the cloudy shape of some strange fowl with two frail wings.

The two men and four women bent over the round well in the center of the large boat and looked into the depths through the thick glass bottom. Jungles of brilliant seaweed stood swaying upright in the water, and black rocks, like sinister animals asleep, lay ominously in the tangles of flame-colored kelp. Fringed anemones, horribly soft, like the mouths of toothless hags, opened hungrily. Green prickly sea urchins, pink sea growths with myriad arms, half vegetable, half animal, and starfish of purple and vermilion clutched the rocks. Out of the foliage glided the fish into the clear spaces, rock cod that flamed like coral, sea bass of a hundred hues and schools of smelts that flashed like silver knives. A great stingray unfolded his bat-like wings and sailed broadly past with whipping tail. A jellyfish raised its ghostly body almost against the glass. A pale and hideous crab launched himself into a dark crevice from which a smaller crab hurriedly escaped. They saw a monster catfish with goblin eyes and black distended mouth dart out to swallow a perch, and a school of tiny fry flee panic-stricken at the approach of a long, fierce fish. A sea anemone was closing relentlessly over a small starfish.

"An eternal war," said the artist, "in the water, above the water, on the land, in the air! Eat or be eaten. It is full of horror—yet the horror is full of beauty, too."

In the air above them two screaming seagulls were battling for a mangled fish. The larger gull darted off with it in victory.

"The race is to the swift," said Julia Grove, smiling against the sun, "the battle to the strong—and it is well that it is so."

As she gazed upon Jerome Kasman to her left she felt her own fleetness and

strength of soul tower above his own. But to her right the eyes of the artillery officer, chilly and hard as the stones beneath them, eyes filled with deliberate defiance and war, were fixed upon her own, which sank before their masculine mastery. The three other women prattled and exclaimed at the strange sights revealed by that oval of green glass submerged in the sea.

"This cliff is called the Cliff of the Lorelei, like that on the Rhine," remarked one of the lesser women.

"Yes, but where is the siren who lured men to their destruction?" asked another with subtle malice.

Julia dipped her hand in the water and flirted away the drops and smiled. She bent over the rail of the glass-bottomed well in the boat. Jerome was also gazing intently into the tinted depths.

"What color—what movement—what light!" he exclaimed. "What a throne for a mermaid—that jungle of waving, flaming seaweed, that bed of gorgeous moss!"

"Mermaids, Mr. Kasman, are extinct—quite obsolete in these modern days," said Julia, with a laugh; "so your throne of seaweed is not likely to have an occupant—unless perhaps a dead one—for I hear that bodies are found here sometimes."

"Quite true, miss," said old Jeffreys, the boatman, "quite true. And it's right below here, right in the thick of that red and spotted seaweed we find 'em tangled. It's the undertow that takes 'em there."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Julia. "Now there would be a subject for you, Mr. Kasman—a beautiful drowned maiden, with bare breast and loosened hair sleeping on that bed of rocks and weeds—some forlorn soul that made away with herself—let us say for love!"

"From the top of this cliff on a fine day," remarked the boatman, "you can see the bottom of the bay, nine fathom deep, just as plain as from the boat here."

A shudder passed through Hector's heart, he knew not why. As for the artist, he was radiantly happy. Yet Julia, divining deeply, realized that his

imperturbable brother was hardening and arming himself against her. No smile lit up those firm, thin lips; her power, her charm could cause no flake to fall from that granite heart.

Again two figures stood forth upon the Cliff of the Lorelei. Julia saw them from the veranda of the hotel and recognized the artist and the artilleryman. Jerome, it appeared, was painting, seated before his easel; his brother stood erect upon the very verge of the precipice five hundred feet above the boiling surge.

"Magnificent as Lucifer—and as cold and hard," murmured Julia. "His breast is bronze like his cannon; his thoughts are shells of steel. Yet he has the terror and the sublimity and the strength of these things—and strength in man is oh, so beautiful!"

Even at that moment, as though the thought of the woman on the hotel veranda, like an electric impulse projected across the bay, had aroused the soul of the man upon the height, a thought came to him. "The haunting of that woman," he mused, "will not leave me. Jerome is falling under her spell, and comes to paint the rock because he is romantic. But I come to stand upon it, to dominate it, to look down upon the world and the things in it, to study lines of rifle trajectory and the velocity of projectiles in theory from this point to that—and yet—"

He looked upon the enraptured face of his brother as he laid his pigments masterfully upon the canvas. All that Jerome had lately done or said seemed to imply: It is for her—it is to her—it is of her. Had he, Hector, the older and the stronger, also caught the infectious fever of infatuation? In seeking to save Jerome from this sirenic creature, to save him for the glories of Art, had he himself fallen under the scepter of this magnificent witch, this temptress of the cliffs and the sea? He heard the rustling of the frothing surge, and looking downward into the sea, beheld the marine marvels on the floor of the bay, clearly revealed, even as the old boatman had said. There it was—the perpetual strug-

gle between life and life—the big fish devouring the little fish in that tangled jungle of scarlet weed. And that, too, was *his* trade. For that his remorseless cannons were cast and kept bright. "Eat or be eaten," his brother had said, shuddering, and he recalled Julia's words: "The race is to the swift, the battle to the strong." Those terms were full of deeper meanings now. They translated to him all the meaning of his soldier's trade, his vocation of punishment, offense and slaughter.

"This water has the tint of the sea at Capri," said Jerome, pausing in his work.

Capri! Ah, that was it! Like the flash and roar of his heaviest guns the truth burst upon Hector. This was the Californian Capri—the same amorous air, the same mild, tepid waters, eternally blue, the same green hills and soft luxurious winds—even the sea caves and the color! Love was in the air and breathed from the ground, and the human heart battled in vain against its call. The very names were steeped in the wine of poetry and romance—Avalon, Catalina, Lorelei! The valiant soul of the man felt it must flee the insidious fascination of this place and go back to his bastions upon the bluffs above the Golden Gate, to the grim black cannon gaping at the ocean, to the hardy buffetings of the tradewinds at San Francisco. There lay strength and safety; here softness, enervating lassitude, unmanly surrender of precious things. It was the fine hunting for the game wild goats that had tempted him hither, and now the hunter had become the hunted—hunted by a woman, by this Diana of the island. He felt himself a startled stag, and the arrow of the goddess seemed already burning in his side. But he would not go back unless he took Jerome with him. And Jerome had steadily, angrily refused to go.

In the fallow glow of that evening Jerome sat beside Julia Grove on the veranda and showed her his sketches. The tongues of gossip were baffled by Julia, for no one knew who nor whence she was, or whether married or single. Yet rumors of some sad romance with a man

of genius had reached the ears of the lesser women, who this evening were spinning slanderous suppositions from that slender thread. Jerome Kasman spoke of his ideals, of his inspiration, of his love for her. The superb creature smiled sweetly and sadly and strangely, but never did the imperturbable calm of the sybil leave her face. Her thoughts were roving with the brother of this gentle dreamer, with the dark, stern man who was stalking through the night along the shore, fighting with his passion. His love was growing like an orb of fire; the defenses of his soul were down; a breach had been made in his breast; the torch of the invader was bent upon the powder vaults in his heart. He hated and despised himself, as he hated the woman who seemed bent upon subduing him, who yearned to drag him at her chariot wheels.

Jerome went daily to the cliff top to pursue his painting. Sometimes Julia climbed the steep trails to watch him at his work. It came to pass that once, when she was perched upon a rock close to the edge of the precipice, her long, loose hair fell gloriously down and the wind lifted it so that it streamed from her head like a dark banner.

"Now you would indeed be the Lorelei," said Jerome, "were your hair golden and not brown."

Julia smiled, paused a moment, then sang a stanza of the plaintive German song. The melody rang clear and sweet from the cliff—it was as if some sea nymph had suddenly made the place her own. Julia glanced down the sides of the cliff and saw a face upturned from a boat that was swiftly drifting toward the horned rocks. It was the bronzed face of Hector Kasman. Beside him in the boat glistened a huge fish, a tuna he had caught far out in the ocean that morning. The officer had listened spellbound to the enchanting melody of the woman's voice as it poured from the height, and his boat had been swung by the currents close to the fang-like rocks. With a savage gesture he now bent to the oars and pulled powerfully for the beach. The Lorelei saw him leap on the sands.

Two men came and lifted a gigantic fish, a tuna, from the boat.

Charles Mallon, the composer, came to Avalon to finish the music for his opera "Tiberius," and to let the land and the sea breathe vigor into his flagging heart. The fires of dissipation had sucked most of the oil from the lamp of his life and the flame was burning faint. He was still young and had been the debonair favorite of society. His health had crumbled into ruin, yet he had not lost all his old grace and sweet, moving charm. Often for days his poor wild soul lay battered before the tempests of his passion for wine. Then from the gulfs he would be lifted by hurricanes of harmony which other men could not hear to celestial heights they could not see.

"Poor Charley," said his friends, who left him one by one, "he has never been the same since." And "since" went back to Mallon's black day of despair, when a woman to whom he had brought a great and golden love had abandoned him for his mild intemperance. So the golden love for the woman had turned to a deeper, more crimson lust for wine, and henceforth in all his music he heard the shouts and jeers of cymbaling demons and but seldom again the sweet litanies of the angels. For five years he had labored in anguish of spirit upon his great opera, his "Tiberius." Now the solitary friend that remained to him had sent him to Santa Catalina to finish his lifework—and perhaps his life. This friend had told him that Catalina was like Capri, where Tiberius himself had lived, and that he would find a fine local inspiration there.

It was an angry and leaden day, rare enough at Avalon, when Charles Mallon took his first walk along the beach, along the blade of that scimiter of shining sand. The beach was deserted—only at some distance behind him a man and a woman strolled. Mallon soon turned about, and with a loose and rambling gait came back toward the pair. He raised his eyes from the sand and looked full into those of Julia Grove. He trembled from head to foot, and a cry of pain broke from his lips. Into

his suffering eyes leaped a monster agony, and bursting into soul-shattering sobs, the poor wretch fled, hiding his face in his hands.

"A lunatic," remarked Jerome Kasman, "or a drunkard."

"No lunatic," said Julia Grove in a gentle voice, "but a talented man—an unhappy man."

A few minutes later, pleading a headache, she left the artist and went back to the hotel.

With all the pathos of some dumb, doomed animal in his eyes, with listless gait, careless dress and a face from which all the ghosts of the undying past looked hollowly forth, Charles Mallon began to take his lonely walks by the reaches of the sea. If by chance he saw from afar the graceful form of Julia, with all her drapery fluttering, he hid himself. Sometimes he climbed the cliff, slowly and painfully, and talked to Jerome as he worked. The two men, artists by instinct, had grown to know and like each other. The painter knew nothing of the composer's unhappy love for Julia, but Mallon knew of Jerome's love for her, and in his own child-like heart it endeared the painter to him. As he could not compose indoors, he brought hither his unfinished opera and sat beside Jerome and looked wistfully seaward with his large mournful eyes. But he never added a note to the manuscript. In the visions of color called forth by the wizardry of the painter's brush Charles Mallon heard but could not seize the heavenly harmonies brought to him on all the winds that blew, and sonorous choruses of tritons and mermaids lifted up from the billows breaking against the promontories.

This afternoon he had laid the sheets of music manuscript upon the turf that covered the top of the cliff, and placed a round stone upon them. In the distance, far below them, at the farther end of the beach, the two men on the Lorelei's cliff saw a man and a woman walking side by side. Their eyes followed the pair hungrily. In Mallon's look there was only despair, in Jerome Kasman's a pensive and uncertain hope. No jealousy of his brother had yet crept into his heart.

He knew Hector, knew his invulnerable front toward all women, his cold, relentless attitude that stood against her sex like something armed and alert—indeed like some defiant fortress.

A sudden, impetuous squall of wind pounced upon the place. The round stone rolled from the fluttering pile of music manuscript, and like a flock of snow-white songbirds the many sheets rose into the air, turned and flashed in the sun, soared upon the wind, then drove and scattered, some toward the hills, some toward the sea.

Charles Mallon, as one stunned, looked blankly at the havoc of his hopes and lost ambitions. Then he stared once more with a dull fixity upon that white figure remote upon the beach.

"Great God!" cried Jerome. "You have another copy, I hope?"

"It was the only one," replied the composer in a hollow and desolate tone.

He flung himself upon the turf, damp with the salt breeze, and buried his face in his crossed arms. The painter's heart was sore with sympathy. He sought to console the miserable man. He did not know that it was not because of the work he had lost that the heart of Charles Mallon was broken within him.

As Julia Grove returned along the beach, she met Captain Kasman. One of the sheets of "Tiberius," tossed about on the eight winds of the world, was still scurrying back and forth across the sands. There came a breeze which blew the paper toward the advancing pair. It flattened against the skirts of the woman and clung there, held by the wind. The officer was about to flick it away with his light walking stick when Julia caught it up and glanced at it. She paled, and without being observed by her escort, she folded the sheet and placed it in her bosom. The bars of written music seemed to burn and beat against her breast and to ring in her ears, a music that ran down the entire gamut of the past.

For two days the composer had not been seen on the island. On the evening of the second day men began to search for him in the hills and ravines. Julia Grove, bareheaded and with a strange

disquiet in her eyes, went out alone into the night of stars. Her feet were drawn along the beach, she knew not why nor whither. In a lonely place inclosed between two spurs of cliff she came upon an overturned boat. A low and incoherent voice flowed from the shell of wood, a broken voice that rambled on without a pause. It babbled of forests, of red seaweed waving in green deeps, of silver fish that flashed in the floods, of choruses and arias and the wonder and beauty and terror of the sea. It spoke of Julia and dear and tender things of long ago.

Julia grasped the gunwale of the boat and turned it over with one tug of her sturdy arms. Before her, white upon the sands in the moonlight, lay the man she had known and rejected of old. In the madness of his fever he had crept beneath the boat to die as a dog creeps into his kennel. His large, luminous eyes roved aimlessly; his poor dry lips kept up their delirious mutter and murmuring. The splendid woman raised him to his feet; she half supported, half carried him along the beach. And the moonlight, leaping over the cliffs upon that silver scimiter of sand, flung their shadows before them, two shadows that were as one.

In the room adjoining that in which the ailing and delirious composer lay, Captain Kasman sat and reasoned with his brother far into the night. Jerome's infatuation now possessed him utterly. For many days his paints and brushes had lain idle. His whole spirit, his entire being, his very art, as Hector saw, lay prostrate before the feet of this imperious woman. The man and his personality were subjugated and enslaved, sunk hopelessly in a passion which the officer knew must prove utterly devastating to his hypersensitive brother. The thing he dreaded most had happened, for only two hours before Jerome had confessed to him his passion for Julia Grove, his resolve to win her hand in marriage or—fateful and fantastic alternative—to spend the rest of his days in a monastery he had visited of late.

"I need a woman like her to help me

through the world," said he, "a strong woman, or I shall have to quit the world myself—and I'm too timid to go the quickest, surest way. In a day or two I shall know—but there's poor Mallon groaning!"

Jerome left the room to minister to the sick man. Whatever course his brother would pursue, Hector knew that the fair flower of art would cease to bloom in the brother's soul.

Julia Grove, with a strange, fervent solicitude, had at once devoted herself to the fever-stricken Mallon, and both she and Jerome sat for hours beside the bed of the unfortunate composer. The scattered sheets of the opera "Tiberius" were found, one by one. A reward was offered for each page, and one by one they were brought back to the hotel by those who found them strewn across the hills, along the beach or floating in the sea. Three sheets had caught themselves in a small clump of scrub laurel that grew in a small ledge halfway down the face of the Lorelei Cliff. A series of other ledges, equally narrow, led diagonally down from the peak of the cliff, the steps of a stone stair spaced for a giant's climb. Julia had looked yearningly at the three white sheets of the music score as she stood with Jerome on the beach.

"With those sheets in our possession," said she, "the opera would be quite complete again."

"But they are absolutely inaccessible," answered Jerome. "It is as much as a man's life is worth to try and climb down there."

"Yes, as much as a *man's* life is worth," echoed Julia with a peculiar smile and emphasis, as she glanced curiously at the artist.

More than once, when Captain Kasman had seen the white figure of Julia coming toward the hotel after a stroll upon the beach, he had given himself the grim pleasure of sighting his empty sporting rifle at her breast from within the obscurity of his room, feeling even in the idle act a foreshadowing of the satisfaction that would come to him might he but send a steel-jacketed bullet through that haughty, selfish heart. It seemed to him now that only in her re-

moval or death could there be deliverance for Jerome or for that which was to him even dearer than Jerome—Jerome's art.

The following day Captain Kasman again went forth into the heart of the hills to hunt the wild shaggy goats, this time without his brother and without a guide; but neither herd nor single goat had crossed his path, and it was again early dawn as he approached the town. For a moment he rested upon the top of a neighboring hill, awaiting the sun. A mile distant he saw the pointed head of the Lorelei Cliff rearing into the brightening heavens. Then the sun rose gloriously from behind the mountains of the mainland. Its wan, mellow beams struck the crest of the Lorelei. Hector Kasman suddenly started, seized his field glass and leveled it at the cliff. Plainly revealed in every feature, as well as by her short-skirted white dress, he saw Julia standing on the very verge of the precipice! A light, cold yet bright as steel, flashed into his eyes. He snatched up his rifle, small of bore but of wonderful carrying power, crouched behind a boulder and sent his glance along the chill blue barrel through the sharp telescope sights. But the rifle trembled; it wavered in tiny circles. With an oath against himself, he threw it down. When he looked again with naked eyes, the figure of Julia was gone; it had vanished absolutely.

Slowly, as the sun mounted higher, he strode toward the cliff. He reached the spot where Julia Grove had stood a short while before. He looked down, down to the sea, into the depths of the crystalline waters at the base of the cliff. His eyes distended; he stood still and rigid, sending his keen, devouring sight into the waters of the bay. A white form began to shimmer up from the living beds of scarlet kelp that writhed in the clear emerald water, a white shape, a white face. . . .

His own face grew ashen; a strange and deadly feeling struck at his heart, till, summoning his will, he ran down the steep, long slopes of withered grass toward the beach and out upon the little wharf. Old Jeffreys, the boatman, was

cleaning his glass-bottomed craft. Captain Kasman, calling to the old man, seized a long boathook, and together they rowed to the base of the cliff.

They saw her lying there, two fathoms deep, her beautiful face turned upward, in the very spot that had charmed them by its weird beauty, on the throne of the moss-covered rock, in the bed of the flame-colored weed, amid the clinging sea urchins and fringed anemones. To the eyes of the startled men she appeared like some mermaid asleep—a realization of the drowned woman she herself had pictured in jesting words and sportive mood. They saw that in one hand she held clutched a branch of the tiny laurel tree that had broken in her grasp. Tucked in the folds of her dress at the breast they marked the three sheets of music she had been able to snatch from their perilous lodgment, before the treacherous tree or loose rock had precipitated her from the heights.

With the boathook Captain Kasman raised the splendid body from its cold, watery bed of state. The thin wet garments clung close to the statuesque form as the officer lifted the dead woman in his arms and laid her down in the bottom of the boat. No throb answered the hand he laid upon her heart. Like some ancient figure hewn in the whitest marble she lay there, her face pale as ivory in the early sunlight, her thick and radiant hair making a pillow for her head. Captain Kasman drew off his velveteen hunting coat, covered her face and sat down beside her. Slowly old Jeffreys rowed the boat toward the shore. It was still very early and Avalon was not yet astir. Hector carried the dripping form toward the conservatory that adjoined the hotel. Here amid the flowers he laid her quietly down, then went indoors.

He found his brother lying fully dressed across his bed in a posture of despair. As Hector entered Jerome raised his head; his face was gaunt and gray; the lids of his large tender eyes were swollen and the eyes themselves charged with a crushing grief. The two brothers looked at each other hollowly, and each seemed to the other more like a

ghost than a being of flesh and blood. Jerome spoke first, nor did he observe the look of surprise that played across the stern, sad features of his brother, nor the start he gave as the younger began:

"Hector, she is dead to me—dead as the world. What I feared and what you hoped has come to pass, but not in the way you thought. I feel that my art survives it all, that it is made richer by this sorrow, as I am made stronger. For

I must tell you that last night, as I sat with Mallon, he suddenly told me all. "She is my wife," he said, "my—"

Jerome did not finish his phrase, but flung himself once more face downward upon the pillows. Hector looked upon the despairing man; the look of sternness vanished from his face, and then the look of sorrow, and in their stead came a mild, soft light of pity as he laid his hand gently upon the head of his younger brother.



VAIN CONQUEST

By REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN

IF I should force her heart's proud citadel
And storm the bastion of her armored pride,
I think, though I succeeded overwell,
That I should find the garrison had died.
If I should seek to enmesh with silken net
That butterfly, her fancy, I might win
Rare specimens for Love's collection, yet
The life had fled before I took it in.
To gain a painted picture of her love,
To win a simulacrum of her heart—
Were victory well worth the price thereof
That may be bought in any city's mart?
What shall it profit me to win the whole
Of her fair body, if I lose her soul?



IF you wear hobble skirts, at least your friends can't accuse you of running after men.



WISDOM is greater than wealth—our wisdom and the other man's wealth.

ADDENDA FOR THE NEXT DICTIONARY

By WARWICK JAMES PRICE

- A**GNOSTIC—a blend of spiritual laziness and self-satisfaction.
BACHELOR—the widow's solace and the spinster's hope.
CONSERVATION—a national need often confounded with conversation.
DENTIST—one who uses other people's teeth to feed himself.
EPIGRAM—half an idea.
MORALITY—a line of conduct which the other fellow has to toe.
OPTIMIST—one who believes the statements of a mining prospectus.
PESSIMIST—one who finds only dough in his shortcake.
RECEIVER—a court officer appointed to see that no one connected with a defunct business receives anything.
SAINT—a sinner who kept on trying.
SYNONYM—a word used when you can't spell the one you first thought of.
WEDDING—a hopeful outlook upon *unseen* circumstances.



ALONE

By MABEL LAIRD GOODE

ALONE—with thee
Close where I touch thy hand,
Grant to thee all that thy love can demand
With purest joy—thou mayst not understand
Or learn of me.

Alone—no word
Is there to frame my heart,
Bleeding beside thine own with unknown smart;
Can voiceless cry its yearning love impart?
Is silence heard?

A SPECULATION IN HAPPINESS

By JULIE M. LIPPMANN

"I DIDN'T mean to peek, Tom," confessed Mrs. Blanchard as soon as they were alone, Kathleen having departed to read her letter, "but I don't mind telling you—it's from Olive."

Tom Blanchard slowly withdrew his gaze from the door which had just closed upon the retreating figure of his young sister-in-law, and suffered it to rest for an instant upon that of his wife, before fixing it finally upon his cigar end as the object most deserving, when all was said and done, of his fond scrutiny.

"Well, my dear, then, if you didn't peek—mean to, I should say—and you saw, notwithstanding, you're to be congratulated. One doesn't always get the game without the shame, you know."

He shifted the position of his long crossed legs and smoked on in silence, enjoying the pleasant aroma of his weed with the sense of well earned rest coming after a day of strenuous but successful operating on the Street.

"Olive uses a stub," continued Emily in the even, persistent tone of one not to be discouraged by mere preoccupation on the part of her auditor, "and her hand is as black and uncompromising as Fate."

With his mind full of his big deal in Shawnee Common, Blanchard responded clumsily: "Why, I always thought Olive's hand was rather conspicuously the other way—unusually white, you know, and—and—"

"I am referring to her handwriting," Emily quickly took him up in the tone he had once remarked "ought to be labeled 'extra dry.'"

"Oh!" said Tom a trifle lamely.

For a moment his wife deliberated;

then she drew up a low chair and settled herself comfortably upon it, resting her elbows on her knees and propping her chin with her palms.

"You like Olive, don't you, Tom?" she inquired.

"Like Olive? Why, yes—of course I like Olive!" He had not yet succeeded in banishing all thought of Shawnee Common, and his words came forth slowly, retrospectively, between languid, appreciative inhalings and out-puffings.

"Pity she hasn't money," suggested Mrs. Blanchard with an upward side-glance that her husband failed to intercept.

"Pooh!" returned Tom. "A girl as stunning as Olive doesn't need money. Socially she pays her way and over every time. With her beauty and brains plus the—the—"

"Well, the what?" Emily demanded, prodding his lagging speech.

"Why, the—personal pull of her," Blanchard returned. "You can see for yourself," he continued after a moment, "the combination carries her through. She sees everything, goes everywhere, and her friends are glad enough to set it up for her for the sake of the reflected glory there is in it—you know what I mean: having a star of such magnitude blazing out from one's own little firmament."

"I don't think the reflected glory, as you call it, counts with Kathleen. That is, nothing in the nature of an ulterior motive lies behind Kathleen's attachment, I should say," Emily declared.

Tom threw back his head and laughed. "The idea of an ulterior motive in connection with Kathleen is humorous!"

he said. "No, Kathleen's simple little organism merely responds to the pull I spoke of. You've seen for yourself how, wherever Olive is, she's always surrounded—she's always the center of a circle. Mortal atoms cling about her as iron filings to a magnet."

"Olive has been away so long," remarked Emily, "I seem to forget details, but perhaps I was dense at the time. Anyway, I don't recollect if you—if you, for example, figured as an iron filing."

Blanchard laughed again. "Other forces operated in me to prevent," he said teasingly, "or I probably should have. In my case marriage happened to serve as a neutralizing current."

"Current?" repeated Emily austerely.

"Yes, current—that and my raisin' acted in your favor," Blanchard weakly punned, rashly risking Emily's scorn for the sake of having his little joke.

But Emily was able to ignore his offense in the sudden realization that the vaporous suggestions, the vague, misty forebodings aroused by the sight of Olive's square, inky chirography had suddenly crystallized into very definite shape.

"Tom," she said bluntly, straightening with a jerk and turning about in her chair to face him squarely, "what if Olive has written to say she is coming back?"

Blanchard met her tragic eyes with a look of frank innocence. "Well, what if she has?" he queried.

Emily's shoulders shrugged impatiently, her racing thoughts resentful of the slow plodding of his.

"Can't you foretell," she demanded peremptorily, "what will happen—what is bound to?"

Tom paused to consider: "You mean—" he ventured gropingly.

"Yes, yes! Harris! It would be absolutely inevitable. I see it as plainly as if it were being enacted here now before my very eyes. Given the conditions," Emily hurried on, "how could it escape? You realize perfectly well what Kathleen is."

"An all-round dear little body!" Tom declared with sincerity.

"Dear as you please," conceded Emily promptly, "but on the very simplest of lines. You yourself implied how simple a moment ago, when you said the incongruity of connecting her with the idea of a motive was fairly humorous—and it is."

"Kathleen is nobody's fool," protested Blanchard gallantly.

"No, but she's terribly 'Early Victorian,'" wailed her sister, "and the type is *démodée* to the last degree. Somehow, it doesn't work into the plot nowadays, and when it tries to, it is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. It was quite in character that Kathleen should adore Harris Trenholm—such a splendid great hero of a fellow as he is! But even if he was attracted to her in the first place, I don't see how she can possibly hold him with the slight personal grasp she has."

"I'll admit," Tom interposed on her dubious headshake, "I was a bit surprised when I heard the engagement was on. And yet, when you come to think of it, why should one be? You see that sort of thing happening every day—splendid great heroes of fellows marrying the simplest, plainest of little wives, and, *vice versa*, splendid great goddesses of girls tying up to mere little whipper-snappers of men. Look at us, for example—you and me!"

The twinkle in his eye died down like a quenched spark before the stern solemnity in Emily's, and he hastened to disprove his mood a frivolous one by continuing seriously: "In choosing Kathleen, Trenholm may have been simply obeying the law of the attraction of opposites. Besides, we're talking as if Kathleen hadn't any charm. Now, as a matter of fact, she's got a lot of charm. It's distinctly of a gentle, demure little order, but it's there, and it counts. She isn't Minerva and she isn't Venus, for the matter of that, but she's the eternal feminine from the ground up, and don't you forget it—and that's not a half-bad sort, my dear, even if it isn't 'Later Albert Edward,' or whatever you choose to call it. That's what I mean. Probably it's just that quality, *die ewige Weibliche*, that caught Trenholm in the

first place. He's undoubtedly aware he's an earthly paragon, and calculated that in choosing a wife he'd strike a better average if—

"Ah, he *calculated!*" Emily broke in desperately. "Don't you see how that immediately proves my point? I mean that Kathleen will stand no chance beside Olive. For he wouldn't *calculate* when it came to Olive—he couldn't. He might try to resist, but in the end he would simply respond to the law that draws the iron filings to the magnet—to borrow your figure. She would do the same thing—for if she has the 'personal pull,' he has it to even greater degree."

Blanchard cast his cigar from him and rose to his feet with a sort of troubled impatience.

"It's all pure surmise," he responded, "but at the worst why wouldn't it be just as reasonable to predict that two such positive forces might quite naturally negative each other? Here you are, working yourself into the finest kind of frenzy over a tragedy that doesn't exist and probably never will. There! Quit it and let's talk of something else."

His big, kind hand caressed her hair affectionately a moment before he stooped to kiss her.

"All the same," she murmured against his cheek, "Olive mustn't come back—not until *after!*"

Meanwhile Kathleen, sitting in her bedroom behind locked doors, with Olive's letter still unopened in her lap, watched the mellow autumn sunlight playing in great golden patches upon her floor, and listened to the far-off, hoarse "caw-caw" of hungry crows foraging for food over distant denuded fields.

The letter was a bulky one, and as it continually compelled the girl's eyes back to it from their helpless little escapes beyond the calm corners of her charming chamber to the great, unperturbed spaces of the dun-colored world out of doors, it seemed a silent witness testifying to Olive's big, generous, uncalculating spirit, her free-handed, unstinting use of materials the cost of which she never stopped to count.

Olive had not, as she often laughingly admitted, "two cents to crack against each other," but her fine, square, inky chirography covered sheets of thin, steamer paper where Kathleen's delicate hairline hand naturally compressed itself into mere paragraphs, and Olive's letters invariably arrived with double and sometimes triple postage due, because of their writer's utter inability to detain herself with such petty considerations as ounces and fractions of ounces.

The envelope now in the girl's lap was fairly bursting its sides with the eager interest Kathleen knew Olive would be sure to lavish upon her on the occasion of her recently announced engagement, and yet she hesitated to open the letter, hanging back from it instinctively as from something that in some way portended issues and crises she felt herself too weak to meet.

All her life Kathleen had lived in conscious realization of her own shortcomings. How she had originally become aware of them she could not herself have told, for everyone was "most kind to her," but she could not remember a time when she had not known she was considered "a good little thing, but—" That "but" had seemed to predestine her to eternal, irremediable inferiority. It was useless to try to grapple with so vague, so fateful a condition. It bound her within limitations that it would have appeared a sort of high treason to even attempt to surmount. It would never have occurred to her to defy public—*her* public—opinion, to regard the judgment of those about her as debatable, to challenge its infallibility by proving herself other than she was generally conceded to be. She accepted herself at the universal appraisement. She was what she was: "a good little thing, but—"

So it has never fallen to her to take an active share in the life about her. The world in which she moved carried her along in its smooth current, demanding nothing of her beyond a mild acquiescence and the knowledge that she was backed up, fortified and made generally eligible by her "good old family" and her ample inheritance. Emily, pretty,

capable, clever Emily, with her double share of executive ability and her un-failing fund of "initiative," could easily furnish all that could reasonably be required of one family in connection with society.

If Emily had been with Kathleen at the Vandergrifts' in August, there would have been no doubt in anyone's mind that her sister's engagement, following quickly upon her meeting there with Harris Trenholm, was "a personally conducted" affair of Mrs. Blanchard's—the direct result of her skillful engineering. Even as it was, her unseen agency was strongly suspected, and jokes were current touching her "wireless wire pulling" and Kathleen's success as a creditable example of "matchmaking taught by correspondence."

Happily, none of these whispered insinuations reached Kathleen's ear and the knowledge that the crowning glory of her life had come to her unsought, upon her own merits, as it were, served, as nothing else could have done, to awaken in her a sense of distinct and independent individuality.

Heretofore she had been passive under the generally accepted theory that she "owed everything to Emily," but she was aware she would not have been willing to owe *this*.

"This" was so precious, so unspeakably dear, that to owe it to anyone or anything outside of Providence and its divine dispensation would be to rob it of its highest value and still to put oneself under an obligation so limitless that nothing but life itself would serve to lift the debt.

With the first realization of actual possession sprang the fierce, elemental instinct of self-protection, the impulse to resist any force threatening her property and the haunting suspicion that such a force, indeed, lurked in even the most innocent appearing presence.

In Kathleen's "simple little organism" a rather complex situation had developed, in which she vaguely saw herself as she felt she might have been at the beginning of the ages, a primitive young savage, cautious, never secure, never unsuspecting, ever on the alert for

the first sign of attack and ready to repel it with teeth and nails if need be. While in the shadow of that figure, blended with it, in fact, as part of its substance, moved the Kathleen of today, the least resistant of human beings, a creature quelled to a soft quiescence by conventional authority, to whom Conformity had been represented as a god to be unquestioningly obeyed and Individuality a thing to be as unreasoningly shunned.

In some subtle, unexplainable way, the image of Olive had risen before Kathleen's spiritual vision almost in the very first instant of her unexpected, new-found happiness. But the figure, beautiful as it was and of so compelling a charm, instead of being a thing to rejoice in, had suddenly seemed to become transformed into something to be dreaded. It was horrible to think of Olive in this way—Olive, whom Kathleen loved, and on whose loyalty she would be ready to stake her life. But though she had instantly thrust the vision back and tried to trample it underfoot, burying it beneath a multitude of delightful memories, it continually arose and threatened her afresh, every well-remembered bewitching trick of voice and manner proving a new menace to her happiness. With heart-piercing distinctness she saw herself a mere little insignificant, brown wisp of a woman beside this splendid classic creature. How could she hope to stand the comparison? And yet she might be called upon to suffer it if Olive were writing to say she would come back—

There was the letter in her lap, waiting to be read. It would at least end her suspense. Why did she shrink from it? Kathleen's lips tightened as, with set determination, she took up the heavy envelope and tore it feverishly open. The pale, blue-white sheets, crammed within a too narrow space, now that they were released, unfolded at a touch, and a sheaf of the loosened pages fell with a fluttering sort of sigh to her feet. She stooped and picked them up, a pang of self-reproach impelling her to touch the paper gently, as if it could feel.

She did not realize how long she spent

in reading it until she heard the clock strike seven, and knew that in twenty minutes Harris would arrive from the city and she was not prepared to go down and meet him.

The effort of dressing in such haste brought the color to her cheeks, so that at dinner and throughout the evening no one suspected anything amiss. It was habitual with her to slip into the background when others were in evidence, and she rarely ventured to assert herself in the presence of Emily's brilliant wit.

But Trenholm glanced up with a look of surprise when, after letting the others monopolize him the entire evening, she murmured a faint "good night" and stole upstairs without waiting for the chance of a moment alone with him.

"What's up? Isn't Kathleen well?" he inquired, a note of anxiety in his voice.

"Perfectly, so far as I know," replied Emily. "But if you'll excuse me, I'll go and see. You and Tom can finish your cigars in peace, for I won't come down again. And, Tom, examine the fastenings the last thing before you come up, won't you, please? Symonds goes through the form of locking up every night, but his heart isn't in it as it would be if the silver were his."

She ran gaily off, mounting the stairs lightly, comfortably confident of herself, with no troublesome uncertainties as to others, until, upon reaching Kathleen's door, she turned the knob to let herself in, as her habit was, and found the door locked. Then something more than the material barrier brought her to a standstill. The fact that Kathleen was for the first time asserting her will, claiming, as it were, her right to a privacy and seclusion of her own, smote Emily with a sense of sudden check. She stood before the closed door for a moment quite dumb, realizing that it represented a new condition in her relation with Kathleen—for what does a shot bolt signify unless the protection or sequestration of something behind it? And what could there be in Kathleen, either of experience or thought, that Emily might not have free access to? She laid her hot

cheek against the cool polished panel of the door and called softly, imperatively: "Kathleen, let me in!"

Almost immediately there was the sound of the key turning in the lock, and the door swung inward, revealing Kathleen still fully dressed on the threshold. Emily's eyes took her in from head to toe in one comprehensive flash, making instantaneous note of the unconscious downward droop of the corners of the mobile mouth, the unaccustomed purplish tinge of the heavy, tristful eyelids and the faded hue of the usually rounded cheeks. She said nothing, however, merely turned and closed the door, sauntering over toward the hearth, where she bent toward the purring fire and spread her little pink palms to the genial glow.

"It's cold tonight," she observed casually.

"Yes," said Kathleen.

"Oak takes an awfully long time to catch, but when it once fairly does, it burns steadily with no nonsense about it."

"Yes," repeated Kathleen.

A small rocking chair was drawn up before the fire and Emily settled herself in it comfortably.

"Tom and Harris are talking market, downstairs," she explained. "I'm interested in the result, but not especially in the process, so I made my escape and came up to have a little chat with you. By the way, why'd you ask Tom what speculation is? For your one and only contribution to the evening's social intercourse, it sounded rather kiddish. But perhaps you're thinking of taking a flyer."

"I wanted to have Tom's definition," replied Kathleen briefly, the little break in her voice, so unconsciously, attractively habitual with her, becoming marked and tragic under the stress of her inner tumult.

"Well, and did Tom's definition sufficiently enlighten you? Let's see; it was: 'the investment of capital at a risk of loss on the chance of unusual gain,' wasn't it?"

Kathleen nodded.

Emily searched her face covertly.

"You certainly don't dream of try-

ing to monkey with anything you've got, do you?" she demanded sharply.

Kathleen deliberated for a moment, nervously braiding her fingers together in a shy fashion of her childhood that had survived her girlish days. "Not with my money, no!" she responded after a moment.

"Oh, well, I guess there's no danger," her sister admitted, rather ashamed of having been betrayed into so openly showing her hand. Then, glancing toward the table: "You've heard from Olive, I see."

Kathleen took up the letter which Emily's sudden entrance had left her no time to dispose of, and held it tentatively in her hand as if she were weighing it.

"Yes," she said.

Emily glanced up with a faint assumption of unconsciousness. "How is Olive? Any news?"

Kathleen drew up a chair and sat down in it. "No, nothing special," she replied. "It's my news the letter is full of. Olive can't get over it—that I should be engaged, you know. She's so surprised, that it—it's almost a reflection," Kathleen concluded with a nervous laugh. "Only, of course, she doesn't intend it to be. She doesn't realize I'd rather she wouldn't be so amazed—that there seems a sort of slight in it, the idea of its being so extraordinary that such a thing could happen. Well, of course, it is extraordinary, but it doesn't hurt so much if I think it as if other people do. Olive says it makes her feel she's been away too long, that in her two years of absence I must have developed quite out of her knowledge of me. She thinks I've made a life for myself—formed new relations, that shut her out. She wants to come back. She wants to see me and—and—and meet—" Kathleen consulted the written sheet in her hand, as if to make certain she quoted correctly. It took a second or two before she found the exact line for which she searched, but at length she fixed it and read it aloud:

"I want to see you and meet the fortunate man before you take the fatal—I mean *happy* step. You see, if I didn't approve of him, if he

didn't seem good enough for your precious little self, I'd forbid the banns, and of course you'd submit, like the pliant small person you are.

"The Franklands—Lord and Lady—have asked me to join their party to the North next summer—they will have a gay yachtful, and I've always longed to see the Land of the Midnight Sun—but if I come to you I must give it up, for I can't possibly afford the trip to America and back here in one year. I'll have to stay put. Contrariwise, if I decide to go with the Franklands you won't see me for another twelvemonth and probably more, for once you're married, my last close tie with home will be snapped. Now, it's up to you to settle the question. If you really want me, I'll give up everything over here and come home with the Everetts on purpose to be with you before your marriage takes place. It will be our last chance to be together as we have been for so many years in the past, for, of course, you know that afterwards—well, nothing can ever be quite the same afterwards. Marriage will make the great, the eternal, the inevitable difference. So say the word, Kathleen, and I'll give up the Franklands, the Land of the Midnight Sun and every other alluring prospect for this winter and come to you, instead—which doesn't sound flattering, but really is. By the same token, withhold the word and I'll stay. In either case count on me to understand, and believe I'll continue always

"Devotedly yours

"OLIVE."

Emily was on her feet in an instant, as if brought up bodily by the force of her mounting satisfaction. She could not keep the high note of relief out of her voice.

"Oh, then it's all right," she announced gaily.

Kathleen's fingers, busy assembling and folding the scattered pages of Olive's letter, paused in their task, and she looked up quickly. "What is all right?" she asked distinctly.

"Why, Olive," returned Emily unguardedly. "I thought she might be coming back, and of course if she had made up her mind to do it, we couldn't have prevented her. But she leaves it to you, and that disposes of the whole question, don't you see?"

In the sudden rebound from an apprehension whose weight she had not fully realized until now when it was removed, Emily waxed incautious. "All you've got to do is to write her immediately that we'd love to have her, of course, but things are going to be terribly rushed and crowded after a bit when we really

begin preparing for your wedding, and, all things considered, it'll really be better in every way for her to carry out her plans and go to the North with the Franklands and postpone coming back until—well, the future. Tell her the Franklands' invitation is too good an opportunity to miss, and she ought to take advantage of it. Tell her you couldn't dream of selfishly depriving her of such a chance. Tell her—"

A dull red had mounted to Kathleen's cheeks as Emily proceeded, and her eyes had dilated and darkened perceptibly, but her sister, in her eagerness, was too absorbed to see.

And then an odd thing happened. Little Kathleen raised her hand enforcing silence with a gesture full of authority and command.

"Sit down, please," she said gently, "and listen."

Emily mutely obeyed.

"I see you have been thinking just what I have, but I don't believe you realize what such a message as you suggest would imply—I mean, how completely, how hopelessly it would give me away."

Emily stared. "Give you away!" she echoed blankly.

"Yes, give me away," Kathleen repeated distinctly. "For, of course, if you are frightened, as I see you are, I am frightened ten times as much. I'm mortally frightened, so frightened that—But no matter! Neither Olive nor anyone else must know I'm frightened, and if I sent her such a letter she would know. So, you see, it won't do. I can't write her not to come."

For a calculable period of time the two sat silent regarding each other dumbly, before Kathleen, who seemed the only one capable of surmounting the difficulty of speech, began again in a very low voice.

"It's hard to speak out—but how can you understand unless I do speak out? And I must, somehow, make you understand. I've never been able quite to convince myself of my happiness. It has seemed too rare and beautiful a thing, that such a"—she hesitated, then brought it out courageously—"that

such a man as Harris should care for *me*! I've always felt it wasn't real, actual fact. But when it came to me, of course, I had to take it. It was natural to take it when it came, wasn't it? Somehow, even then, at the moment I was taking it, and feeling how little I was worthy, even then I thought of Olive, of how I wished I were what she is, and then the fear began—the fear that some day she might come, and that when she did come he would realize—the difference. It has been in my heart ever since, and it has grown and grown until now the whole world is black with it. Suppose she should come! Suppose she should come! And then there arose another thought. If she is really the one he would naturally prefer, have I any right to keep them apart? I mean, have I any moral right not positively to bring them together? I can't express myself clearly—it is all very confused in my brain, because, you see, I am so troubled, and then, of course, I'm so dull. But I feel it, and I feel that unless I act now, at this point in my life, before I have done what I can't undo, and determined my fate and—Harris's once for all, I'll be haunted all my life by this awful terror, and if I had to bear that, I'd die—I'd rather die! Think of it—not knowing if he were really mine or not! Dreading to have Olive come—Olive whom I love! And think of it, if she did come and Harris and I were married and they—those two—found that she and not I ought really to have been his wife—Ah, it would be horrible! For I would know I had deliberately, consciously, deprived them of their chance—that I had taken something that didn't belong to me, simply because it was offered in ignorance. Don't you see, don't you *know* that I must write, cable, to her to come—to come at once? It's the only way to vanquish it—to prove it. I can't live my life with this horror haunting me forever. I've got to go forward to meet it, and then kill it or—let it kill me. If I don't write her to come, don't you see I'll be ruining my chance of happiness forever and theirs, too? But if I do, and if, by some strange fortune they shouldn't

care, why, I'd be free—I'd have saved myself and them! It's a terrible risk, but I've got to take it. You understand, don't you, how I've got to take it? I asked Tom what speculation was because that was in my mind, because I knew that was what I had to do—speculate in happiness—in mine and theirs. I've got to stake all I'm worth, at the risk of loss, for the chance—the *chance* of—of gain."

The quiet voice had dropped to almost an undertone, and as the last syllables came in labored breaths that were virtually smothered sobs, Kathleen hastily gathered up her scattered letter, the pages of which had during her confession fallen unregarded to the floor and beat a hurried retreat to her dressing room, closing the door after her against Emily and all the rest of the world.

Olive responded to Kathleen's wired summons by a prompt return.

She was, to all outward appearances, the same as when she went away or, if any change at all were visible, it was in the direction of an even more pronounced, a more conspicuous beauty. Emily's exacting eye could detect no flaw in her, nor in the manner of her meeting with Kathleen and Trenholm. It was all quite perfect, quite beyond criticism.

As the door of their sitting room closed upon the Blanchards after the general dispersal at night, Emily clasped her hands tightly together like one panic-stricken.

"Oh, the little fool, the little fool!" she wailed hopelessly. "She *would* do it, in spite of everything I could say, and now she's ruined her chances utterly. For she'll lose—she'll lose! There's no hope for her; she'll lose!"

Blanchard bit quite through his cigar, then set his great jaws hard with a sort of grim click of his strong teeth.

"The odds are against her, but she may win out yet," he said. "Anyhow, I take my hat off to her. She's got pluck for a dozen and no mistake. By the way, if I recollect aright, you applied the term 'Early Victorian' to Kathleen not long ago. It appears to me we've mis-

appraised her. For a 'simple little organism'—my phrase, it strikes me, for the first time, I admit, that she goes into things rather deep. I take back 'simple little organism,' and I think you ought to take back 'Early Victorian.' I don't know of anything much more contemporaneous than the way her passion for Trenholm has worked out in her. For a starter she's taken a pretty big plunge—but even if, at the worst, she stands to lose, as you so cheerfully prognosticate—she's going to pull out of this with something great for her pains. It may not be happiness, as you see it, or as she does, but it's going to be something that in the end may be essentially more worth while."

Emily shrugged impatiently, turning her head away to hide the rare real tears. "There is nothing more worth while," she brought out fiercely, brokenly.

Blanchard knew better than to pursue the subject just then, and though in the weeks that followed he ventured to warn her that she was focusing too steadily on the "game," that the unblinking vision she brought to bear on it was developing in her a faceted eye, he was interested enough on his own account to watch as closely as he might during the hours he spent at home.

Kathleen betrayed nothing in her behavior, and it was a matter for wonder to Blanchard how she could keep it up—that gallant little manner of hers, the patience, the fortitude, the characteristic self-effacement, when he knew under what an inward strain she labored. He swore he had "seen big men on the Street put up a worse bluff."

He made light of it all to Emily, but he was not so unperturbed as he tried to make her believe.

Olive had punctually declared her approval of Trenholm, had assured Kathleen lightly that, being now satisfied of Harris's quality, she would sanction the union, and had since maintained an attitude of *bon camaraderie* toward him that, so far as outward appearances went, was as far away as possible from anything covertly significant, and that would have convinced anyone less subtly discerning than Emily.

Trenholm's customary manner, with its cryptic reserve, its touch of indifference that might pique but could never possibly offend, of so broad and impersonal a quality it was, had from the first of her knowledge of him defied Mrs. Blanchard's analysis. It defied her still, even though it obviously relaxed under the charm of Olive's warm, persuasive personality.

But of Olive herself Emily had small doubts. She insisted to her husband that as time went on she discerned more and more unmistakably that Olive was disguising a deeper feeling than she dared to show under her feint of good fellowship.

"Oh, pshaw!" said Blanchard. "The girl is genuine. She's in a hard place. Anything she might do or leave undone would seem significant to us because, you see, we're looking for trouble, and we're looking for it with what, I think I told you before, is an abnormally developed equipment of optics."

Perhaps this was so, but Mrs. Blanchard was not in a mood to accept it.

"I know what I know," she observed oracularly.

"Didn't I understand Kathleen to say," asked Olive one morning when, the flight into town for the season having been long ago accomplished, she and Emily were speeding down the Avenue in the latter's neat electric car *en route* for the shops, "didn't I understand Kathleen to say when she announced to me her engagement that it was intended she should be married immediately? This isn't 'immediately.' Let's see; I got her letter in London in September, didn't I? And, as I gathered, the marriage was to come off in October. Here it's mid-December and," she laughed, "I see no very active preparations for the approaching nuptials."

"No," admitted Emily; "Kathleen has asked Harris to wait."

Olive laughed again. "It's bad luck to put off a wedding. She'd better have it over and done with."

"Why?" inquired Emily, daintily laboring with a knot in the twine of one of her parcels.

"Oh, I don't know. Men are deceivers ever. You never can tell. I've noticed a long engagement is apt to be wearing. Kathleen's hasn't been so long, to be sure, but I have fancied she isn't looking as well as she was. Why don't you just step in and settle the date for her?"

Having delicately picked her knot loose, Emily was now busily engaged in making it fast again. It was a second or so before she replied. Then she said with apparent nonchalance:

"I don't care to meddle. It's particularly bad business interfering between engaged people—for better or for worse, whatever one's motive may be."

Her sudden, upward glance caught a faint, quick vanishing contraction of Olive's fine brows.

"Did you see Mrs. Mason Maxwell?" Emily asked abruptly. "She just passed on your side. That's a stunning new limousine she's got, isn't it?"

"I didn't notice," returned Olive without endeavoring to look. "The thing is, that if the wedding doesn't come off very soon, I'll have to miss it. I'm going back—to the other side."

Emily felt her heart leap.

"I thought you said if you came over here this fall you couldn't go back. Didn't you say so to Kathleen in connection with the Franklands' invitation for the summer?" she inquired, her voice vibrant and tense with her new illumination.

"Yes," returned Olive quietly, "I thought so. I felt I couldn't afford it. But I find I can manage. I've had letters from London—friends there—urging, insisting that I come back, and much as I am enjoying it here—you and Tom and Kathleen have been heavenly to me—I'm afraid I've been away so long I've got the *wanderlust*. I don't seem to fit in here as I used to. I feel an outsider, an alien. It's less confusing to feel that way in a foreign country than at home. It explains itself there, while here—"

The car's slackening speed and its final noiseless halt beside the curb before a shop where Emily had purchases

to make was excuse enough for the sentence being left suspended in midair.

That night Emily told Tom that what she had suspected in Olive she now positively knew.

"She wants to cut and run," she explained. "She can't stand it—that's the truth of the matter. She could brace up to the actual fact of the marriage itself—she has sand enough for that—but she can't endure the agony long drawn out of this waiting process, seeing him every day and—"

"Then, she hasn't the grit of the little one," interrupted Tom. "Kathleen's enduring the 'agony long drawn out,' the 'seeing him every day' and—all the rest of it, isn't she?"

"When I mentioned its being a bad business coming between engaged people she winced," continued Emily. "I saw her do it—as if I'd touched her on the raw. But her mind is made up about going."

"What do you think Kathleen will make of it?" inquired Tom.

"Can't say. Since that night when she spoke to me first, she hasn't uttered a syllable. I know no more what's going on in her mind than if she were a stranger out of the street. I've tried once or twice to get back to a confidential footing, but she softly, firmly resists every approach, and as I don't precisely relish being snubbed, however sweetly, I have just ceased putting myself in the position, d'you see?"

"And Trenholm?"

"Oh, he's unfathomable! That's what Kathleen's waiting for—to make him out. The minute she does, she'll act."

"How do you mean 'act'?"

"Why, marry him—or make Olive."

"Oh, Lord!" groaned Tom. "She is planning to help Olive out!"

"Why should you be surprised? What else in the world has all this signified from the beginning?"—Emily put it to him bluntly—"if not that she's planning to help Olive out—unless, indeed, it's that she's planning even more particularly to help Harris out."

"And Kathleen herself?"

"Ah! that's where her recent unconscious self-revelation has got to help us

out. My idea is, that she hasn't the faintest ghost of a hope on her own account. She's too completely 'on' to herself. She knows. She sees. I never realized before that she did—but she does. But if she's planning to help Olive out, I can tell you I'm not. I won't help her out by the utterance of a syllable."

"What d'you mean?"

"Well, for one thing, I won't be a go-between. I won't deliver her message to Kathleen. I won't tell Kathleen she's going back. She can tell it herself and let Kathleen have the full effect of the wonderful cat it'll let out of the bag. That will be the first step in the direction of ending Kathleen's suspense, and she'll have only Harris left to prove. The minute she's done that, as I said before, she'll act. And then, at least, this awful waiting will be ended, and she can set about attending to her broken heart."

"The way you take things for granted—"

"Well, didn't *you* a moment ago, when you said she is planning to 'help Olive out'? What else did that imply? We're neither of us blind. But I'll tell you what I'd like; I'd like to be a fly on the wall when Olive tells Kathleen."

"By Jove, there are no flies on Kathleen's wall—nor on Kathleen either, and don't you forget it!" Blanchard slangily declared with clumsy enthusiasm.

But the most observant fly would not have detected much in the actual scene when, after some days Olive, after waiting to see if Emily would not break the news for her, told Kathleen her plan.

"I thought when you cabled me," she explained, "it was for some urgent reason."

"Yes, it was," admitted Kathleen.

They were sitting before the fire in Kathleen's room, and it was late at night.

"Well, then, whatever the reason was," Olive continued after a moment's pause, "it hasn't been disclosed to me. As far as I can see, I came over—I didn't lose a minute: I hurried posthaste—on a fool's errand."

"Oh, no!" Kathleen protested.

"Well, then, where is the wedding? Where are the bells—the cake—the rice? I passionately long to cast a shoe at Mr. Trenholm."

Kathleen smiled brightly to match the very gay laugh with which Olive flung off her bit of extravaganza.

"Don't go!" she pleaded. "Stay! Wait! And perhaps you can cast something better."

Olive, still laughing, shook her head. "No, no! There's nothing better. I've tried my glove, and he didn't take me up. He resists all my efforts to allure him. I wonder how *you* managed?"

"Oh, I never tried to allure him," Kathleen said.

"I believe you," Olive declared, dropping her flippant tone and becoming instantly serious. "Well, anyway, dear child, I must go. You see, it is this way. I needn't explain, I suppose, but I want to make it altogether clear. My means, or rather my lack of means, are such that I can't afford to turn down invitations that offer me a home for any length of time. I've just *got* to help myself out in that cannibalistic sort of way—by living on my friends. It is terribly sordid, utterly detestable, but it's the bare, unvarnished truth. If I tried to get along on my own income I'd be capsized in a month. Once you're married I wouldn't care to stay on with Emily and Tom. They are as good as gold, and hospitality itself, but a third would always feel an intruder upon such a *solitude à deux*. In a large family one just slips in and seems insensibly to become part of the whole without disturbing the rest of the elements or feeling *de trop*. There's such a drove of the Chester-Leiths that one more or less in the household doesn't signify. They're actually—it sounds boastful, but it's really so—clamoring for me. Alicia de Morgan wants me, too, and so do the Grevilles. I can easily fill in the rest of the winter with them and stay out the season in London, and still not wear my welcome out in any one place. So I'll be carried along until the Franklands take me to Scandinavia. You see how it is, don't you?" she concluded, pushing her point with nervous energy. "You've never, thank the

powers, been in my situation and had to count on your friends' generosity for a living, but"—with a sigh—"beggars can't be choosers, and you see how it is."

Kathleen's gaze, which had been fixed on the dancing flames, removed itself slowly until it rested for an instant on her friend's face. But it was only for an instant. A faint color rose to her cheeks and she began fingering her rings nervously.

"Yes, I see how it is," she uttered at last, her voice gaining steadiness as she went on, "and I'm glad you told me. It gives me a chance to say something that has been on my mind for a long time, Olive, dear, though it has nothing whatever to do with what you have just said."

Olive flashed a quick, furtive look at her, but Kathleen's eyes were bent steadily on her rings.

"I mean," she stammered laboriously, "what you have said hasn't in the least acted on me as a suggestion. It's my own idea entirely, and I want you to accept it as such and not feel, now or at any other time, that I was influenced by anything but my sense of justice—and right. I want you to let me allow you an income. No, no, please don't interrupt! Things are not fair in this world. One has too much and another not enough. It would make me feel happier, more satisfied, if I knew you were provided for—that is, in case you don't marry, in case you have to go back to the other side."

The low-pitched voice had grown fainter as if under too great an inward strain, until at last it trailed off into quite a toneless whisper.

Olive was about to speak, to make some protest, utter some ejaculation of gratitude, but Kathleen shook her head to impose silence.

"It won't be enough to talk about," she said presently, "so we won't talk about it. It will just serve to keep you independent, not compelled to—well what you have just described. I want you to be free, to have a fair deal, as Tom says. I've thought a lot about it and there's an awful mistake some-

where—in the scheme of things, I mean, the way we have to live under the present social conditions.”

Olive's vibrant laugh rang out suddenly, resounding, clear; and so unexpected it was that Kathleen looked up in surprise—a surprise that was accelerated by the strange expression she caught in Olive's face.

“What do *you* know of social conditions, you precious child?” Olive gasped between her bursts of merriment. “You talk just as if you'd been delving down into the heart of things and—and *people*, and had discovered—what you've no business to be troubling your little brains about. What would Emily—what would Tom say if they knew? I see them permitting you to allow me an income! I see them doing it! But you're a *dear*—the dearest of dears, even to suggest such a thing, and I thank you just the same as if—”

The muscles of the beautiful face twitched and worked, and suddenly the chin dropped upon Olive's chest and her shoulders shook under a storm of racking sobs.

Kathleen, springing up, had her arms about her in a minute, soothing, comforting, calming her.

“And I want you to know,” she asserted at last, “that I am in dead earnest about the allowance. Emily and Tom have no right of control over me in any way. I can act as I please; they know that. Of course, *if you marry*, it will be different. But *if you have to go back to the other side*, you shall have your allowance and—and what I say I will do, I will do.”

Though Olive had arranged upon no definite sailing date, it was generally believed that she had it in mind to go at the beginning of the new year. Impelled by a curious sense of self-reproach for some injury she had not inflicted, an impulse to make up to Olive for something she had had nothing to do with depriving her of, Emily's hospitality gained an impetus that was fairly bewildering. She meant to give Olive “the time of her life,” she explained to Tom.

“On the principle of ‘eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow you die?’ ” retorted Tom. “All of which goes to show how deuced glad you are to get her fairly out of the way.”

“Well, if it only *is* fairly—”

“Why, I thought—” Tom exclaimed with a sudden questioning lift of his fine, level eyebrows.

“That the whole thing was settled?” Emily supplied for him. “By no means. Harris still remains the same trousered sphinx that he's been from the beginning, and Kathleen is still waiting to fathom him. When she does—if she does—well, the likelihood is Olive will remain and Kathleen will go, unless, indeed, Olive *and* Harris go and Kathleen remains.”

“Oh!” groaned Blanchard.

“I wish it was over with once and for all,” sighed Emily. “This sort of thing is undermining my nerves.”

It had been storming steadily all day, and as night approached the increasing cold causing the rain to freeze, clad the smooth asphalt in a sheath of still smoother ice.

Harris at the dinner table gave a graphic account of his perilous journey hither, asserting his friends must surely love him for the dangers he had passed.

“We do; we will! But you've more still to pass,” laughed Emily gaily. “You've more to face, so we'll love you more. Tom and I shall have to back out of going to the Opera tonight, and you and Kathleen are to take Olive in our place. Olive has set her heart on hearing Sembrich again, and this is her last chance. You're to stay the night here; your room is ready. You're to have the car instead of the 'bus, because it's too slippery for the horses, and if the motor should skid—”

“You can skid, too,” punned Tom, laughing.

“Hush! Don't interrupt!” Emily said, frowning him down sternly. “See, Harris, how I've thought of every detail and arranged it all without even waiting to discover if you're willing! That's genius, let me tell you! It's the touch of the true executive.”

“But a trifle hard on those executed,”

put in Olive. "If it's only on my account that Mr. Trenholm is to be dragged out again into the cold world, after all his hairbreadth escapes, I absolve him. I'm like Marjorie Fleming; 'I can be quite happy without my desire being granted.'"

But of course such a sacrifice was not to be thought of, and Harris and Kathleen together assured her they were as eager to go as she was.

"There! We're fairly home, and where are all your tales about the dangers you have passed, for which we were to love you?" demanded Olive, a certain high note of saucy, gay defiance in her voice that Kathleen had observed she often used in speaking to Trenholm. "We haven't had the shadow of a danger, so our share of the contract is off."

The Opera was over and in the cozy, intimate comfort of Tom's splendid car Olive almost regretted the end of their short journey.

"Don't be too sure. What is it they say about not hallooing until you're out of the woods?" Harris returned, with his slow, quizzical smile regarding her steadily.

The little electric bulb above their heads made it possible to see quite distinctly, and Kathleen noticed the wonderful look in Olive's eyes as they met his, and seeing it, she removed her own, a great, painful throbbing at her heart. From her shadowy corner, peering up, she could see Trenholm's face turned toward Olive, and it seemed to her, in her state of quickened apprehension, that his keen eyes suddenly softened, then kindled as if catching fire from the spark in Olive's and then—there was a quick, terrible impact—a crash of broken glass—darkness—the weight of some awful bulk outside pressing against them with deadly force—the hiss of escaping gas—a streak of mounting flame and—a soul-piercing, heart-eloquent cry:

"Harris! Harris!"

It was Olive's voice.

"Hush!" cried Trenholm hoarsely.

In a second he had wrenched, pushed, pried the door open, and was out upon

the street, Olive half fainting in his arms.

"Kathleen, can you come?" he shouted back sternly.

"Yes," she made answer and crept after him—after *them*—across the pavement and up the short flight of steps that led to the Blanchards' door.

When Trenholm came back—he had insisted on going out to satisfy himself as to the damage done Tom's car in the collision—he found Kathleen waiting for him in the hall—alone.

The house was quiet as death.

"You ought to be in bed, child," he said softly, smiling down at her from his great height and putting his hand gently on her hair.

"Yes, in a moment," she panted almost inaudibly. "But one word—I want to say one thing—"

"Well?" he tried to help her on.

"What has just happened," she faltered, "has shown me what I ought to do. I ought to give you up—and I *do* give you up—here—now—"

For a second Trenholm's brows hung heavy, threatening, over dark, impenetrable eyes. Then suddenly they shot fire.

"Why?" he demanded briefly.

Kathleen shook her head.

"Why?" he repeated.

"Don't force me to tell you," she quavered piteously. "You know."

"You mean because I turned to *her* first—because I seemed to desert you in favor of her?"

Kathleen gave a little cry.

"Oh, no, no! Not that! Not that! Because you—because she—you love—"

Trenholm bent low to her, his firm hands gripping hers in a grasp that hurt, until with a quick, almost savage impulse, he caught her to him, clasping her close.

"I turned to her first," he said, breathing hard against her cheek, "because I know she is weak. I left you to follow, because I know you are strong—because I know you would never fail me—because you are like part of myself—because, more than any living thing on earth, I love you, Kathleen!"

THE SEASONS OF LOVE

By ALOYSIUS COLL

OH, but we were Maying when you lost your heart to me!
I found it in the poppies and the violets meek and blue;
I found it, gone a-straying with the golden-belted bee,
That scorned the trumpet blossoms for the honeyed lips of you.
I found it in the cradle of the bobolink a-swing—
Ah, little touch of motherhood awakened in the spring!
The first of woman's wonders in your heart that only knew
That flowers were made to blossom and the orioles to sing!

Oh, but we were Maying when you gave your word to me—
A secret softly bidden from the Eden of desire.
I heard it in the lyric of the lark and chickadee,
The wind that sang the riffling wheat to waves of silver fire.
I caught it from the lisping pine, the babble of the stream—
Ah, little cry of babyhood—the first endearing dream
That turned you from the echo to the singer and his lyre,
The things that are and shall be from the things that only seem!

Oh, but we were Maying when you gave yourself to me!
I took you with the blossom in your slender finger tips;
I took you with the first ripe cherry red upon the tree,
And half the gift and giving was the berry on your lips.
I took with you the gentle clasp of tendril on the vine—
Ah, clasp of little fingers on your heart and over mine,
For oh, though we were Maying in that tender fellowship,
We dreamed of golden harvest and the yield of purple wine!

And lo, the golden summer, love, the shuttle, silk and loom
Of magic done to music and of bud to berry done;
And oh, for all our Maying when the cherries were in bloom,
The harvest ripe and scarlet is, and golden as the sun.
For we were of the blossoms when they whitened on the tree,
And for this, that we were tender in the noon of bird and bee,
The blossoms of our Maying, like the cherries, one by one,
Have sweetened and have ripened in the heart of you and me!



THE hobble skirt shows which way the wind blows.

BEAUTY

By CARL S. HANSEN

DESPITE the wildness of metaphysics, it always has the sane excuse that it is personal; it has a relationship to ourselves that keeps us intimately in touch with the subject. This isn't a virtue found in esthetics, for esthetics, after all, is mere geometry of art applied by a mathematician. So if anyone is going to be frightened by this mite on beauty, please understand it isn't going to be mathematical. I'm going to chat to tired souls, and not force anyone to the blackboard to prove relations in art that aren't worth while even if true. I don't want to talk about art at all; I want to talk to you about yourself.

It used to be a metaphysical doctrine that if you were deaf and blind there was no light and no sound. And it was a bit queer, too, for you were always thinking that, if you couldn't see or hear, perhaps someone else could, and that would upset your metaphysical logician. But the metaphysician was right, if he had stuck bravely to his proposition and to you. Without your eye and your ear, a sunset and a symphony wouldn't mean much to you. The eye and the ear, developed out of the primary sense of touch to make a better fighting animal, after a time invoked in you wonder, delight, reflection; in other words, in the sensations you call beauty, you discovered yourself.

So you don't want definitions about beauty, for you know all about it. Haven't you run bareheaded out of the house to see Halley's comet, and don't you sigh to go to the theater oftener than you do, and don't you like a brass band, at the head of a funeral, sounding a grand sad march? Beauty, you know, is what interests you, moves you, lifts

you out of your rut and flashes your soul vividly before your face, as sometimes startlingly you catch a glimpse of your brain with a candle by the side of your head. Tone it up or down, it doesn't matter, for we needn't be dogmatic about it. Without your eye and ear there would be no color nor sound for you; without yourself there would be no beauty for you to discover. What you want isn't definitions of beauty, but more opportunities for beauty.

We tired souls are always on the lookout for beauty; in fact, we put our whole energies into this one pursuit, and call it under various guises—love, business and what not. We drudge a year to take two weeks off at the seaside or the mountains, and once in a while, if we are lucky, we wander abroad through palaces and art galleries. But the long year, grinding day after day at the canery bench or at the counting house, we long for flashes of beauty, for big glimpses of ourselves; we get infernally cross with our neighbors and swear we are living in Milpitas. Beauty is in Yellowstone Park somewhere, or in Paris, or Melba, if she is on our circuit.

And there's where we miss it. We've followed the mathematician in our search for beauty, not the metaphysician. We can find ourselves, when we know the clue, everywhere—even in our neighbors and in Milpitas. There's beauty in all life, and just as much at the end of our elbows as across the fence. It doesn't belong to a place; it belongs to the mind; for the Parisian goes to the province and the provincial goes to Paris, each for his holiday. A sense of beauty, a never-ending sense of the lovely in life, should be the richest gift in the

world, for it's ever green. Only two or three in ten thousand can see the Yellowstone and one in a hundred go to the theater as often as he cares to. But we ourselves, the curious, the longing, the sympathetic, the aspiring and the depressed, always remain. Our sense of beauty must be satisfied in order that we may live. But wherever we go, the spectacular jades after a while, and to our astonishment the humdrum in the lives about us become marvels to the stranger.

Beauty then becomes an atmosphere, something we can hardly do without and hardly get away from. The recognition of it as a life principle is important, almost the most important in the world, for with it we can be happy as long as we live. Come, aching hearts, with me, and look with ear and eye and find joy and wonder! Only this morning I went to a bit of a mud pond off a London slum, and on the bank was a mother duck and five ducklings. At the sight of me, three of the ducklings made off for the water in alarm. But the mother studied my straw hat out of the corner of her left eye and called in a low voice; she knew I was only a clumsy elephant with no intention of harming ducklings. Then I began to throw crumbs to the ducklings, and a sparrow, a mere sparrow, a bird I had been taught all my life to detest, came hopping close for a share. He was so cunning and cheery, so willing to put up with what came his way, that he filled me with a sense of comradeship. Why had I had no place for the sparrow in my little soul, both of us living in the shadow of the same slum? Somehow we seemed to be playing the same sort of game in this queer universe, and he more bravely than I.

How many poor women I've seen, servant girls and hard-worked wives, filled with woe because no beauty came daily into their lives! Dear souls, it is all around, as the air. It is next door in the grumbling neighbor, in the cat on the doormat. We don't have to seek it in the big things of life, good though they are. Beauty is within ourselves, looking out at the rest of the world and finding conversation.

The great enemy of beauty, the slayer of ourselves, is monotony. On the plains, the charm of the air goes after a time; on the sea, colors cease to fascinate; in the mountains, nodding trees become mere wood; the gay city boils down after a while to a chaos of bedraggled men and women going in and out of ugly houses. Then we feel pain; we say if we had the price we would take a change of scene for a fresher glimpse of ourselves.

Now a difficulty with a patient is that his very symptoms nearly always prevent his doing the simple things for himself that he would instantly, if well, do for another. Don't you remember having gone helpless to bed with half-frozen feet, and so making for good conditions for a bad cold? For someone else you would have prescribed a hot drink and the water bottle, but the toxin of your symptoms robbed you of the power to prescribe for yourself.

So I speak as a kindly physician to those bored. Price isn't always necessary. Simple remedies are often as good as the most costly, as a warm foot bath will do as well for cold toes as a ten-dollar prescription. Break through the circumstances that envelop you! Let your soul discover fresh glimpses of yourself! Find yourself in a story book or a half-hour call, a walk, a bit of music, a song. Take unto yourself something hurt and broken, that is playing the same queer game of life as yourself. I know a lonely old fellow of seventy-seven, storm-wrecked five thousand miles from his own fireside, who every day goes to the street corner and feeds the sparrows, to keep the tears back. This is the price of his beauty—the crumbs of a dinner he would otherwise throw away. Sometimes the sound of another voice for one minute will fill you with gladness a whole day. But the beauty you crave is ever at your elbow, ever waiting to reveal to you yourself. Reach out and take hold of it. Make it a daily habit, as of eating, to look for fresh glimpses of that unknown cheery self, in overlooked, worn-out nooks and corners; and you will have more beauty in your life that way than a month every year in the Louvre.

A SAINT PROTESTANT

By E. C. VENABLES

WHEN, after the failure of Grynston & Co., Peter Grynston III died, the widow with her young son moved into the little house on Market Street which had been her home when she was Alice Robson. Taking up her life there again she found it very much as it had been in that earlier time, with the tremendous difference, of course, of Peter IV. Peter III had lived, married, failed and died, and the incident of his existence passed into the miracle of his son's. The widow was a plump little woman with faded golden hair and tear-worn blue eyes, and she had an infinite capacity for protecting men who loved her chiefly for her helplessness.

But the people of Monmouth, looking up at the closed green shutters on Prince Street, mourned as friendly neighbors at the sight of Ichabod thus sternly written on a once triumphant hatchment and possibly realized that without exaggeration a great many things are vanity. For the fortunes of the Grynstons, never brilliant, had nevertheless the mediocrity of stability. The position of the family in Monmouth resembled the position of the family pew in church, halfway up the middle aisle. Individually also they resembled that particular possession, which was so strait-backed, hard-cushioned and high-seated that any position therein except one of perpendicular piety was impossible.

Peter IV was too young at the time of these happenings to share the public sentiment, being six months short of nine years. The widow did not share it either. She had thirteen hundred and seventy dollars a year to live on and her son to herself, which was more money

and indeed more son than she had ever had before—for the in-laws had interfered and advised and suggested on all possible occasions until death and bankruptcy scattered them. The house was neither small nor dingy to her mind. She had spent a very happy girlhood there, alone with her father. He was an artist, poor in pocket and in talent also. It was the monthly cheques from his half-sister, Mrs. Carlisle, which supported them then, though he always kept a canvas on an easel and daubed at it for a couple of hours daily. But these cheques came with unvarying regularity, and were sufficient. They had never talked of money and she had never thought of it. So in a way she was always rich. Money matters, the size of the house she lived in, the style of gown in her wardrobe were never problems to the lady. The only problem she ever encountered was the shaping of Peter's future, and this she solved after five nights of prayer by giving him to the Lord after the manner of the mother of Samuel and many devout widows since. It was a great relief to her mind, and also to Peter's, who didn't like school and was very fond of the minister, who came in to tea on Tuesday evenings.

The plan was communicated to him when he was eleven. He liked it at first and grew up with it until when he was twenty-two it was as much an accepted part of his life as the color of his hair.

The first year of his life at the seminary differed in no essential from that of the years which had preceded it. The change of physical environment was not reproduced in any other circumstance. He had anticipated a great deal that was new to be the result of his going out in

the world, and was surprised and a trifle disappointed at the unexpected continuance of the old. Then in the second year the change came, and Peter passed into the hands of other spiritual pastors and masters.

It was in November this began. Exactly, it was on an overcast afternoon in the second week of that month. He had walked alone to a strip of coast some three and a half miles east of Newton called Newman's Beach. It was a lonely place in winter, though much resorted to by picnickers in the summer-time, a bare, level stretch of sand perhaps a mile in length. On this afternoon a gray mist hid one end of it from sight of the other and made it more desolate than ever, and the tall young theological student in his black clothes striding up and down over the sand seemed like some incarnation of the spirit of desolation inspecting a favorite bit of his domain. He was very deeply absorbed in making the lost rhyme of the third stanza of some verses descriptive of himself.

A girl came walking down from the northern end of the beach as he turned in that direction. A black and white fox terrier was frisking about her, jumping at some object she carried and barking excitedly. It was this sound that made him raise his eyes. Then she was about fifty yards distant, walking swiftly toward him out of the mist.

She wore a white Tam-o'-Shanter set rather far back on her head and a white, closely fitting knit jacket, and she walked with a swift, easy stride.

"Would you do me a favor?" The words were called out to him in a clear, rather high voice from ten yards away.

He lifted his hat and advanced to meet her without saying any word in reply.

"Would you help me turn over a boat?" She stopped and looked at him eagerly. "It's just a little way up there." She pointed northwest. "I can't do it by myself. I've tried. Would you mind?"

"No, I wouldn't mind."

He didn't try to hide that he was looking at her. She was as tall as his shoulder and had what would have been al-

most the ideal of a masculine figure. Her bosom was full, her hips broad perhaps but thin, and her body tapered down to the delicate ankles which showed below her short skirt. She gave the impression of perfect balance, the rarely feminine combination of strength and grace. Only her neck was small, and above it her large, well-shaped head was poised just as her body was poised upon her ankles, with an indescribable delicacy of balance. Her cheeks were brilliant under a brown skin, her eyes eager and excited, and the mist was damp in her brown hair.

"Thank you," she said. "It is over here," and she turned.

"I know where it is. I've often sat on it. I left a book there last time and I've never—"

"Oh," she interrupted, "I know; I found it. That's why I wanted to turn it over—to see what else was there. And it's only your book." She held out to him a weather-stained copy of Huber's Manual.

"I'm very sorry," he began. "Perhaps there is something else there, for I never looked; we might try, anyway, mightn't we?"

She was turning over the leaves until she got to the title-page. "Peter Grynston," she read out slowly. "Is that your name?"

He blushed and nodded. She looked at the book and then closed it with a snap. "Mine's Conway," she said, "Amélie Conway. I've just come to Newton to live."

II

THIS story is a tribute to that girl who came walking down the beach with a book in her hand. By any other interpretation it loses all significance and becomes a thing without form or meaning, mere sound, with scarcely any fury either. And it is a just and honest debit to her which has never been paid.

Mrs. Carlisle, Peter's great-aunt, recognizes the obligation possibly, but certainly not in the proper spirit. To her it is only a deliciously flavored morsel of ethical contrariness exactly flavored to

her cynical palate. But then Mrs. Carlisle is an idle, rich, selfish old woman whose chief delight is the detection of a new frailty in a world which for the most part is a vast deal better than herself.

The people of Newton take the orthodox view and looked upon Amélie unfavorably when she first came among them. She was the daughter of an artist, and had been brought up a motherless girl by that artist in Paris, of all places in the world. Besides, she frankly rejected all social advances and wore very shabby clothes on the street and very fine clothes within doors, which was peculiar and offensive. Dr. Davies saw her at this time and thought her an unusual woman, and at this time he knew of no use for unusual women. He would have been more severe perhaps had he possessed a higher opinion of Peter Grynston, but Dr. Davies had a superfluity of such widow's mites as this gift from Mrs. Grynston.

Peter himself recognizes it, of course, but even he did not do so until the fact was irresistibly thrust upon him. He fell in love with Amélie the second time he saw her, when she was dressed in the fashion to which the Newton people so strongly objected. The faint halo of romantic friendship about the girl in the white Tam-o'-Shanter would of course have burned in time to a like intensity, but it burst at once into a dazzling radiance about the lady in lace. He fell in love with her then, but he did not fully comprehend her in relation to himself, and hence his debt to her until two months thereafter. Very properly this happened in church. He was reading from the pulpit of the little mission church near the seminary, and for the first time Amélie was in his congregation. He was supposed to conduct himself creditably on such occasions, and on this particular occasion he felt as the soldiers of France are supposed to have felt when they fought on the sands of the Sahara. At the end the words of the benediction scarcely passed his lips, and while something of that peace that passeth all understanding seemed to dwell an instant among the hushed and reverent congregation, he lifted his head from prayer

and looked straight into the eyes of his "forty centuries." Amélie, with a quick answering smile, lifted her hands so that he could see and noiselessly applauded.

He thought it over very carefully while he walked home with her. "Oh, I hope I wasn't irreverent," she said to him when he mentioned the incident. "I didn't mean to be."

"No, you weren't," he answered. "But I was."

Walking to his own room he was bitterly ashamed, but the shame died when he thought of her; since he had left her for a few hours he was conscious only of a great longing emptiness, so that he felt like taking all creation in his arms and hugging it to his heart.

The person, however, whose appreciation is most complete is Dr. Humphrey Davies, professor of Genetic Theology in the seminary and the chief of those spiritual pastors and masters who had charge over Peter at this time. There is a sermon of Davies on this subject—Peter and Amélie Conway—which has for its text the leaven where-with the whole loaf shall be leavened. Peter is the loaf and Amélie is the leaven. It was written a few weeks after the interview, when Grynston told him that his feet had turned into another path than the one prescribed for them. That interview to which the younger man had struggled through four months of very real storm and stress passed as smoothly by as a happy day in June. He said very simply that an influence had come into his life shaping it differently from what he had hoped. He did not name the influence, nor did the other. And he did not offer any other explanation. Only at the end he said:

"You may not agree with me, but I earnestly believe that I am a better man than I have ever been."

Dr. Davies looked closely at him.

"Well, Grynston," he said quietly, "that is a better thing than being a poor minister."

The next day the doctor walked more than was his custom about the town and he met the influence—an easily recognizable figure in that community. Amélie, one of whose peculiarities was an

intense dislike of unnecessary assistance, of all unnecessary things, gave only a half-impatient glance at the white-haired little gentleman who held open the gate for her and kept his hat in his hand as she passed through. But there was a world of admiration in the professor's gaze—and a little jealousy, too, because he wanted for his own a certain part of the young lady's possession. He rebuked the covetous spirit sharply.

To Peter the interview meant but one thing; he had told somebody his secret. Therefore it was a great deal easier to tell her the same secret. He felt somehow as if there was now a tie between them because somebody else knew he loved her. How delightful it was to test that bondage, pulling against the bond, fast, alas! at but one end. So much one confession had gained for him; therefore, by all logic more confession—the great confession.

It came by the grace of a flowering dogwood tree that grew upon a hillside at the foot of which they rested on a bright April afternoon.

"That means spring," Peter said moodily, looking at the dogwood tree.

"Don't you like it?" Amélie asked, meaning spring.

"It is the end of winter. No, I don't like it."

"But the spring will be much nicer than the winter," said Amélie.

"Will it?" Peter asked presently without looking around, without taking his eyes from the flowering dogwood tree.

"Why? Did you like the winter so much?"

"Did you?" he asked.

"Yes," she nodded slowly. "But then I expect to like the spring better."

"Shall I?" he asked, turning suddenly and looking at her.

She started to answer the words, but the look was so infinitely more significant. "Oh, please don't!" she exclaimed. "I won't know what to say."

"You won't have to say '*I won't!*'"

It was, after all, a very small, faint hope he pleaded for. She sat silent considering it. "I like you—better than any man I know—but," she paused an

instant—"but I don't know for how long. I am very changeable."

Yet he kissed her. She forgave him after a fierce quarrel, forgave and forgot the offense. "I do not like you that way," she explained.

"But you do—like me—as you said you did?"

Again she gravely deliberated. "Yes," she answered, "*now* I do."

They climbed the hill to gather some of the dogwood branches, and watched the sunset from the hilltop. There may not have been a great deal in such restricted admissions for his hope to feed upon, but there was her presence and the hour and the scent of spring from all the woods and fields below them; and hope of the sort grows and flourishes upon strange fare. Over to the east they could hear the water falling on Newman's Beach. That filled the air with fragrance faint, sweet and elusive, compelling low tones as if for fear of disturbing such delicate harmonies.

"Do you really care so much?" said Amélie softly, bending shyly over the white petals.

And over the branch of dogwood they held between them Peter nodded and said, "Yes."

She turned her face away, blushing uncontrollably. "I like you—oh, more than I thought I ever could like you," she said. "But maybe it's the place," she added. He came a little closer to her side, but he did not touch her. There had been no pretense in her anger when he had kissed her. They seemed very much alone on the hilltop while the twilight softly brushed the world away below them. She knew that he loved her—he had kissed her; and still they were together. He was quite, quite sure that the bond of that confession bound now both of them.

It may have been only a different point of view that was responsible for her reflection as she lay upon the hearth-rug after dinner that evening. Mr. Conway was in New York for the night, whither he usually went every morning to paint nine well-draped muses on the ceiling of Mr. Harold Dinwiddie's new

library. Did he, she wondered, really care? She decided that he probably did, that he certainly did then. But she was always modest in her estimate of her own powers and a little cynical in her estimate of masculine constancy. "He does a little just now," she told herself, "but it will be better in the morning." Did she herself, she wondered, care also? She fancied she did a little just then, but that she, too, would be better in the morning.

The day's exertion began to tire her after a while and she sank back full length on the fur rug. "I'm not beautiful, but I am attractive sometimes," she reflected thoughtfully. "I was today." The slim ankles stole out from among the white skirts as she stretched out comfortably and her brown hair spread out over the white rug. She was almost beautiful then. Even Agnes thought so when she came in. Agnes disapproved of her enormously, she knew, and adored her also. Amélie adored no one except her father, with whom she was very intimate and of whom she was very much afraid. But Agnes was a nice old thing. She was just as certain of the admiration as of the disapproval. She was just beginning to be certain of the theological student's adoration also and was feeling deliciously pleased and tired and sleepy. Lying on the rug yawning among her tousled hair, she looked like a very little girl and even more perhaps like a sleepy, playful Newfoundland puppy.

But Agnes was firm, and she must go to bed. Had she forgotten that she was to take the eight fifteen train for New York next morning, where she was to spend a fortnight as the guest of Mr. Harold "Dinviddie," as Agnes called him?

So when Peter called next morning she was gone. And Agnes was gone, too. There was only the monosyllabic male caretaker who answered the bell, and who produced a card on which was written in Agnes's pointed hand: "Care of Mr. Harold Dinviddie, 11 East Fiftieth Street."

Grynston spent the next two days writing three letters. One was to Dav-

ies telling him that he was now finally decided to take the great step he had spoken of taking before and that this was his resignation. Another was to the widow in Newton and the last to Mrs. Carlisle in New York, who was expected to open for her great-nephew the path to fortune. He wrote and mailed that one first.

Miss Amélie Conway has read this letter, and she cried over it when the old woman across the tea table turned aside to quarrel with the man for cutting the lemon too thick.

The two others were not so easily written and were never satisfactorily written. But at the end of two days, when he had not heard from Amélie, he put them in his pocket as they were and went to New York to No. 11 East Fiftieth Street.

He was led through a marble hall with palms along the walls and waited beneath the nine draped muses until Amélie came.

She entered, dressed for the street, with brown furs about her throat, and came toward him with the cautious self-consciousness of a naughty child. But after she had sat down he could not find a word to begin what he had come to say. And while he struggled with himself he felt her self-consciousness change slowly to irritation. They were both ridiculous. It frightened him; it angered her. In the silence he could hear her shoe tap the polished floor.

"What's the matter? Can't you speak?" she asked at last.

He looked at her. "I don't know what to say," he answered truthfully.

She felt unbearably ridiculous and her anger overcame her. "Why did you come here? I never told you to come."

"No, but you should have," he answered.

"Why?"

"Because—because—" he began. But probably no man could have said in a sentence what their last meeting was, and he stopped after "because."

She answered frankly the unspoken words. "That's over," she said quickly. For the first time she dropped her eyes and ceased to feel ridiculous.

"For good?" he asked.

The irritation had returned when she answered: "You took it all too seriously because I didn't say anything, and I thought you understood. I told you it was the place and everything. I told you so. Don't you remember? Then why did you come? It isn't my fault."

"Then I won't see you any more?" asked Peter.

"No." She looked at him as she spoke and the quivering misery of his face almost nauseated her. She could not bear to look at suffering. Why, oh, why didn't he go and suffer like that outside where she would not see it?

She rose hurriedly. "Oh, won't you *please* go now?" she entreated.

And without another word he went.

She heard the street door close behind him. For a little while she stood as he had left her. Then she went to the mantel mirror and put up her hands to her hat and straightened the brown furs about her throat. The firm, white fingers fluttered over her dress, touching here and there, crimping a ruffle, smoothing a crease, daintily rebuking the tiniest disorder. Then she stepped back for a final critical survey. Apparently all damage was repaired. With a smile and a nod of congratulation to the picture in the glass she turned away, and crossing the room to a door at the farther end opened it.

"Harold," she called, "Harold, I am ready now."

And so it had all come to an end somehow, as all things do in this world, blindly, stumbling, halting, in a queer wrong-sided way. But it was over at any rate, and there was a dim sort of comfort in that, though the how or the wherefore of it he knew no more than which way to turn when the big iron doors were shut behind him.

After a while it would hurt savagely, but now there was only a strange numbness, that was rather a lack of feeling. So before the numbness passed, he would rest and think. He found he was walking in the Park, and so he had turned west after all. There was a fine gray mist of rain blowing in from the sea.

He took off his hat and faced it, liking the feel of it on his face. The numbness was like that mist. He sat still, bare-headed, enjoying the soft dampness of the rain. In a minute the awakening would come, a sharp pang and then the steady ache. But now for a little he could rest.

Suddenly the dampness struck through and chilled him. He was drenched. Was this the awakening? Would the pain begin now? He rose and walked on. The last carriage had left the Park when he crossed the drive. It was almost dark. The lights were agleam far down the long avenue and in the wet glistening pavements. With the first step beyond the Park gate he left solitude behind him and was among a hurrying stream of people. With an indistinct idea of finding some shelter somewhere he caught their pace and hurried on downtown. Hotels and cafés blazed brightly, but he shrank from entering them in his soaked clothes, and walked on past, seeking some less conspicuous shelter. People passing jostled him, pushing him impatiently out of their way if he slackened his pace.

Once at a crossing he was nearly run down by a motor that sprang noiselessly out of the shadow of the side street. He jumped wildly for the curb, and stood breathless, trembling, leaning against a house corner. The car did not slacken speed, and in an instant was lost to sight among the vehicles in the middle of the street. No one had turned or stopped to watch his escape. Past him they hurried on still, endless rows of strange faces. He raised his hand to straighten his hat and found that it trembled so violently he could hardly control it. As if the gesture possessed some occult power, there was awakened in him by it a chilling sense of loneliness, of isolation, that grew in a moment to a deadly fear. The passing faces seemed no longer indifferent, but hostile, the noise menacing. He was afraid, afraid of the great remorseless machine of the city in which he, like some tiny broken part fallen out of place, must be crushed to atoms. It was not a vague evanescent emotion but a present actual ter-

ror that seized him; for the loneliness of solitude is despair, but the loneliness of the multitude is fear. He could not even struggle against this power which, though manifested about him in countless forms, yet was itself always unseen, unknown. It overpowered him at the first attempt and destroyed all hope or desire of resistance. To flee from its presence was the only escape.

He was half a block away before he reckoned of plan or direction. He must go back to Newton. Then he remembered that of all refuges, from this one he was the most irretrievably cut off. He stopped again. Like the weapons of demons exulting in their malice, the memories of what he had done stung and lashed him. The numbness was gone now, and every nerve alive and throbbing. He remembered all his spirit of revolt, all his vague longing for bigger things—how only a few hours ago he had stood upon the deck of the ferryboat and thought with disgust of the life he had cast off, and with triumphant pride of the new life he was beginning, of Amélie. And always present was the fear and loneliness. Was there no refuge from his fear? Was there no comfort for his loneliness? Was there no hope left shining in the darkness of his overthrow? Had he truly staked all his life upon one issue, staked and lost? The bitterness of the answer was the bitterness of stricken youth.

It was later, very much later, that he found himself in a dark vestibule of a building which he knew to be a church. He could remember taking refuge there from a sudden squall of wind and rain sweeping in from the sea, but he never could remember how great a part his knowledge of the character of the building had played in bringing him there. Perhaps none. Perhaps only a subconscious one. It was sheltered and dark, and the heavy outer doors shut out the sound of the city. From beneath the inner door shone out a thin line of light and he heard the music of the choir, distant and muffled. He was shivering with cold and the water was trickling down from his clothes onto the carpet. A woman passed him going in

and he turned and followed her. There was a man who looked as though he would have stopped him, only he brushed past quickly and went up a side aisle.

The anthem that he had heard faintly outside swelled and rolled, filling all the church with harmony. He sat down at the end of a pew by the wall and leaned back in the corner. He was aching with weariness, and letting his head drop upon his breast he closed his eyes in delicious relaxation. A man behind whispered some words to his companion, and though he could not hear he knew that they concerned him. It did not matter. For a little while he was secure. Then he would have to go on again. So he resisted a little the drowsiness, for if he slept that little while would go so quickly. The organ grew faint once more, and the low hum of the responses in the service hardly audible. The time was flying quickly, oh, so quickly, and yet he could do nothing to hold it back. He could not even open his eyes, they were so heavy. There could be only a few minutes more now, a very few. Could nothing hold them? Some devilish imp was ticking them off in his ears and laughing at him, just as it had jeered at him in the noise of the streets and mocked him in the faces of the passers-by. He was still helpless, helpless and tortured, and the minutes were going by always. It must soon be the end now.

Suddenly he was awake. It was the end, truly. People were going past him down the aisle. He must go. He would go as soon as that woman at the very end of the church nearest the front should pass him. He would follow her. It was only an instant more, and then he would go back to Newton and see all the people who knew. The woman was halfway now.

The people who knew! Who were they? His breath caught and his brain whirled in swift review. Who did know? No one. Complete as had been the revocation in his own mind, it had been in his own mind only. Why should they ever know? What was the barrier that shut him out into this misery? It

did not exist, except for a scruple, a morbid sensitiveness. No—wait! Davies—that letter! His hand closed on the letters in his pocket, where he had placed them that morning. There was a stab in that thought. With a sob of fear and haste he pulled them out and tore them savagely once, twice, thrice across. Then he dropped upon his knees with clasped upstretched hands in a passion of thanksgiving.

The woman passed the pew, glanced at the kneeling figure and bowed her head reverently.

The great door opened before her, and from beyond came into the church the harsh rattling of a passing car. He heard it and buried his face in his hands to shut out the sound, just as a child draws the pillow over its face to shut out the frightening phantoms of the dark.



A SONG OF THE CITY STREET

By ARCHIBALD SULLIVAN

I HAVE wandered the length of your pavement,
I have climbed your stairway high,
I have curtained your broken windows
That face on your starless sky.

I have watched you try to be merry,
I have seen you try to rest,
But you turned again to grief and pain,
Because—you knew them best.

I have heard your voice in your sorrow
Turned to your godless sky,
I have heard you mourn when a child was born,
And laugh when it had to die.

I wander your pavements in silence,
Trailing my robes of gray,
For I am She from the Shoreless Sea,
The Dawn of Another Day.



FATHER—I rather like the young man who has been calling here; he has the right kind of a ring about him.

DAUGHTER—Oh, father, did you see it? Was it a solitaire?

WOMAN—A PUZZLE TO MAN

By W. B. KERR

IT has never been clear to man why woman was created. But in reviewing his past a man is often led to believe that the women were put on earth to help the men make fools of themselves. Possibly the men were in no urgent need of help, but they needed an excuse, and women are an excellent excuse. Adam discovered this fact, and none of his sons have overlooked it.

Men have made a careful study of woman, but they are far from agreeing in their conclusions. Rev. Dr. Gordon, for instance, calls the women "twentieth century angels," while Professor Starr is firmly of the belief that they are savages. Some praise them for their purity and high ideals, and others aver that they are "immoral, untruthful, unscrupulous and dishonest." Many claim that they are changeable as a weather vane, but Professor Willett declares that they haven't changed in three thousand years.

From these few quotations it will be seen that to man woman is an unknown quantity. She is equal to x —and then some. One lone X , in fact, would hardly equal the price of her hat; so the man who attempts to solve the woman problem will need a plentiful supply of X 's, and will find frequent and alarming use for the minus sign.

Man's inability to understand woman may be due in part to the fact that there are so many varieties of her. To find the number of varieties, find the number of women in the world—for they are all different. At any rate, men tell them so during courtship—"I love you because you are not like other girls."

But there are certain facts about

woman upon which men are agreed. They know that she is given to wearing weird hats and giddy garments; that she can grow as much or as little hair as she desires and have it any color in the rainbow; that she tortures her form into shapes that are a marvel to contortionists. She calls these things "following the fashions," but following a plow on stumpy ground would be easy in comparison. However, a woman would rather die than be out of style, so she is willing to dye to keep in style.

Another thing man has learned about woman is that she is always wanting something. She wants candy, flowers, jewels, husbands and other unnecessary things. She also wants to be beautiful, and with some this is a long felt want. When women aren't born beautiful, they try to achieve beauty by home treatment. They paint their faces, pinch their waists and punish their toes to please the critical eye of man, who demands that a woman shall look better than the Lord made her. This may not throw any light on woman, but it proves that man is a reasoning animal.

But men have discovered that it is useless to reason with women. How is it possible to reason with a being so irrational that she will calmly court death in a bargain sale rush, and then turn pale at the sight of a telegram or a garter snake? A man can prove by reason and logic that a saloon is a benefit to a community, but a woman is not amenable to reason. She will merely answer "Pooh!" and smell of his breath.

Advice is also lost on woman—though she continues to receive it in carload lots. Man is never so happy as when

advising woman, and woman is never so happy as when ignoring his advice. She has been advised by every male from the President to the newsboy, and on every subject from the size of her family to the size of her hats. She has been told what to eat, what to wear, how to walk, how to talk, why she is homely, why she is unmarried, how to get to Heaven, and what to do for freckles until the doctor comes. Professor Palmer gravely advises women to learn to flirt—which is superfluous; Editor Harvey sternly adjures them to submit themselves unto their husbands as unto the Lord—which is supercilious; and numerous other learned men are imploring them not to get themselves kissed—which is super-silly. But the advisers have their trouble for their pains.

With such a quantity and variety of advice, it would seem that some of it should be favorably received, but women are proverbially hard to please—though

one wouldn't think it, to see some of the men they marry. However, a woman doesn't marry a man because he suits her, but because he is the best she can get, and she hopes that, like wine, he will improve with age. If he doesn't, she can divorce him for cruel and inhuman treatment in loving her too much or wearing neckties that do not match her gowns. Both these grounds have been used by women in pleas for divorce, which is further evidence that pleasing a woman is not as easy as discovering the North Pole.

It also throws a sidelight on the peculiar workings of the feminine mind, whose cut-across methods and bias conclusions have baffled the mind of man from Adam to Taft.

Being stubborn, man continues to work at the problem of woman, but he will never solve her. Women are wise enough to know that a puzzle once worked out is of no further interest.



LOVER AND COQUETTE

By WALTER YALE DURAND

HE

THINE eyes are fair, thy curls are fine,
 Thy lips are sweet and red like wine.
 I love eyes fair, I love curls fine,
 I love lips sweet and red like wine—
 But I love them most that they are *thine!*

SHE

Oh, eyes that are fair and curls that are fine,
 Oh, lips that are sweet and red like wine,
 I'm glad you're fair, I'm glad you're fine,
 I'm glad you're sweet and red like wine—
 But I'm glad the most that you are *mine!*

THE ETERNAL LAW

By VIRGINIA BERKLEY BOWIE

CURIOUSLY enough, from the very beginning Hillman had seemed the only one in the boarding house who realized the girl's true position. Following her doctor's advice, Rosamund had left all her elaborate gowns at home; and with no visible signs of rank about her, the simple people had accepted her as unthinkingly as they would have done any reserved young girl of their own class. But Hillman was a city man, and had been brought in contact with many of her sort across the counter of a fashionable dry goods house. Therefore he had judged.

This Rosamund felt intuitively, and it set every sensitive nerve in her body tingling to save his pride. Anything, only she must not wound.

Today she glanced at him swiftly as, after a moment's hesitation, he slipped a little awkwardly into his place beside her at the boarding house table. Rosamund wondered whether or not she ought to greet him. She was rather in awe of this alien world, for it had been only a week since the great specialist had sent her to this out-of-the-way spot to find renewed health and content. It was all very strange and a little amusing to her still, though so far she was not sure just what formalities it was necessary to observe. Then she saw that Hillman had looked past her abruptly, half as if he wished to avoid her gaze. A trivial incident in itself, yet it was a further revelation to her of the sensitive honor of the man, and on the instant her resolve was taken.

"You're from Boston, I believe, Mr. Hillman?" she said.

He looked up quickly, surprised into

that overeager note of gratitude with which he met the kindness of women of his own class. "Yes, I work there with Marsh & Martin, you know," he answered simply. He was a tall, broad-shouldered young fellow, dark as a gipsy, the sternness of his mouth touched by some hint of irresolute sweetness.

Rosamund nodded kindly. "So Mrs. Trench has been telling us. But you've been ill? You don't look well now."

"Typhoid fever does pull a fellow down," he acquiesced, still avoiding her eyes. "I was in the hospital ten weeks, and I guess I went back to work too soon. The doctor said I hadn't ought to—oughtn't to have done it, so he sent me up here. Winder's store is rather a change from Marsh & Martin's. We've got everything from plowshares to dress-goods in the same department. But I like the country, and the swimming's fine," he ended, a little confused at his one grammatical slip.

"The country is lovely," Rosamund said gently, rather drawn to him already by the sense of her protection over him; and presently, won by the freemasonry of her youth, she lured him on until the man began to lose his awkwardness.

"Would you care to take a drive some day?" he asked, just before they rose from the table. "If you'd like to see a bit of the country round here, I can get off from the store any time. I'd like to show you the shore over toward Haverton."

He stopped abruptly, and glancing up, Rosamund saw his eyes grown suddenly apprehensive as those of a dog under an impending blow. For an instant all the proud, humble soul of the

man lay naked before her, and woman as she was, she found it impossible not to honor this pride of self-respect that winced so keenly beneath her expected disdain.

"It's awfully good of you," she said eagerly—"if it isn't too much to ask. I'm almost afraid to take so much of your time. But any day you can get off I'll be very glad to go with you, Mr. Hillman."

II

ROSAMUND talked with Hillman again at supper, and when she wandered down in the sunset to the bluffs that overhung the shore, she found that he had followed her.

The sun had long ago sunk below the horizon, and the stretch of water lay at their feet, immense and somber as an inland sea. The west glowed heavily with an ominous scarlet, narrowing closer and closer to the skyline under the approaching wing of night.

Need of companionship made Rosamund suddenly kind. "Won't you sit down, Mr. Hillman?" she said, settling herself comfortably on a low rock.

Hillman laughed with a note of embarrassment. "Certainly, if I may," he said. He hesitated, and then threw himself on the grass at her feet. "May I smoke?" he added abruptly, as an afterthought.

Rosamund nodded a careless acquiescence. Then, something of the wistfulness of the hour coming suddenly over her mood, her thought was drawn far distant from him. With the sense of anguish that was never long absent from her, her glance drifted out over the water again, the sight of it bringing to her something of the pang the sight of the ocean always caused her now. It seemed only to recall the days when that was all that lay between her and her happiness.

The man at her feet smoked silently; and insensibly, under the somber spell of the dusk, Rosamund's musing turned backward toward the tragedy that lay behind her, its shadow that of an unquenchable grief. For two years now the girl had been trying to stifle her

pain, ever since Roy Cathcart had died out there in the Philippines. His death had been one of those unexplainable mysteries of life. Even now there seemed to her no thinkable reason why he should ever have died.

Looking back on that earlier day, even their loving appeared to her almost too idyllic a thing to have been possible. They had met when Roy was just growing into first manhood and Rosamund was a thin slip of a girl. How it all came about neither could afterwards say, only that from the first moment they had known the need of each other. They could not do otherwise than love, two so clearly predestined mates, and so they had drifted into the exquisite throb of first love, with its world of intangible dream.

Only one thing had marred their perfect happiness. Roy had just graduated from West Point, and it was necessary that he should be stationed several years in the Philippines before coming home to claim his bride. Rosamund recalled how pitifully she had begged to be allowed to go with him, but on this point even Roy was firm. Rosamund was too frail to stand the climate out there and they must wait until the War Department saw fit to send him back to God's country. So Roy had bravely kissed away her tears and turned his face to the East.

With him had gone half of Rosamund's heart. The girl was essentially a dreamer, and true to her type, the tendrils of her life had reached up and fastened themselves around the man's stronger personality. Yet in the end that very fact had proved her undoing, for Roy had died.

Tonight, sitting there silent in the dusk with this strange man beside her, all the anguish of the months between came flooding back upon her with redoubled agony.

Hillman stirred at her feet, bringing her back to the world about her. "Miss Townsend," he said slowly, yet very steadily, "I want to ask you something I couldn't ask you up at the house. Did you mind my saying what I did about your going driving with me?"

Rosamund winced, divining his thought. "No, no; how could I?" she cried imploringly. But the man lifted his head with a sort of simple dignity.

"Easily enough. I know what I am, and I've no desire to pretend to be anything else. I know where I stand. I'm one of Marsh & Martin's clerks, and you are—different. I'm not even educated."

His humility stung like a blow. In the darkness Rosamund pressed both hands against her heart, glad that he could not see her face.

"Mr. Hillman," she said very gently, not quite able to keep the pain from her voice, "such things don't worry me in the least. When I give my friendship it is as woman to man, and the rest doesn't matter. I never think of it at all."

Hillman shook his head. "Excuse me, but I don't believe you. Such things can't be."

"But they can! Oh, please believe me!" She stopped breathlessly. Then she said: "I think you must be a very good man."

"Who—me?" He gave a strange, incredulous laugh. "You don't know me."

"I believe that no one can be as honest as you and not be good," she said, longing to bring him some comfort. "Surely it is something to know that you are one a woman can trust."

She was half sorry for her impulsive speech the next moment, for he lay very still, with only the light from his pipe starring the gloom. When he spoke again it was in quite a new voice, very gentle, but with all the hesitation gone, as if she had given him back his pride. "You are very kind to me, little lady," he said almost reverently. "It's women like you who make men decent. You trust them so that it puts them on their honor to be good. I'm not a good man myself, but, God knows, you can trust me."

"I know it—I know it," she cried, laying a kind hand on his shoulder for an instant, only half conscious that in her pity she had flung down the last barriers, and that thereafter their acquaintanceship must become intimately personal.

Presently he looked up again, meeting her eyes with a return of his self-conscious hesitation, and yet with a tacit acceptance of the comradeship she offered. "Little lady, I want to ask you a question, but I'm afraid you'll think wrong of me."

"I sha'n't. Please don't be afraid," Rosamund murmured.

"It's this: Either you or I have a wrong idea in our way of thinking, and the only way to do is to have it out; we have to understand each other. I've never met anyone like you before. The others were—different."

He stopped, as if at more than one unpleasant memory. Then he went on slowly: "Why is it that the others thought it lowered them to talk to me, and not you? I can see for myself that you're above even them."

For an instant Rosamund hesitated. It was hard to answer that and not wound him.

"It's this way, I think," she said at last, very gently. "When one is quite certain where one stands, it isn't necessary to bother about such things at all. And there's always the human side to meet on, where the only thing that matters is the sort of men and women we happen to be under our civilization."

"So that's it, is it?" the man said, rather doggedly. He looked up presently, saying in a curiously meditative way: "You see, the hopeless thing about me is that I know I sha'n't ever be anything but what I am now—haven't got the ambition or the staying power. It's mostly lack of education, I guess."

"But it's quite possible to succeed in life if one only tries," said Rosamund, attempting to believe in that platitude of youth.

"Not for me, little lady. Isn't in me. Somehow, I don't seem to trust myself enough, though I've a pal somewhere down in Oklahoma who's promised to look out for a chance for me down there. I don't worry much about it, though. It'll probably all come to nothing, like the rest." He spoke in a calmly contemplative tone that was quite free from self-pity, much as if he were reviewing an old subject long ago decided.

From the first there had been an elusively familiar note about Hillman which had puzzled Rosamund, and for which she could find no explanation. Turns of thought, a certain sensitive honesty and strange insight into the things that are, all struck her as something known long ago. Now, suddenly, by one of those flashes of intuition in which enlightenment comes, the man's type was made plain to her. She had seen it but once before, and then in Roy!

The force of conviction struck her like a blow, leaving her breathless. Yes, there could be no mistaking. This man of the *bourgeois* and her own light-hearted lover were wrought of the same primal stuff. Now, at last, she knew the source of that attraction which had drawn her to him, notwithstanding the social barrier between them. For again the eternal type had claimed her, following the behest of nature which decrees that nothing is unique, that everything is only the variant of class.

The moon came up, floating on the edge of the moorland like a disk of magic. Rosamund shivered. She wanted to be alone that she might think. Only one thing was clear to her. She must keep this man's friendship in her life, cost her what it might, for already it had grown necessary to her. And the handclasp she gave him at parting was only an earnest of the loyal comradeship to which she pledged herself. In the days that followed Rosamund saw much of Hillman. In the beginning it had seemed to Rosamund that it was Hillman's likeness to Roy that bound her to him. Afterwards their friendship had assumed a more personal note.

The change was subtle, almost imperceptible. Little by little Hillman's personality began to fill her waking hours, dimming the memory of Roy. For two years the realization of her grief had been with her, sleeping and waking. Now, feeling it slipping from her, she made no effort to preserve it out of loyalty to the dead.

After all, it seemed no disloyalty to Roy, only a further development of her love for him, which held her faithful to his type. And all unknowing whither

she was tending, she put her hands in Hillman's and called him friend.

III

ROSAMUND glanced up swiftly, momentarily oppressed by the sense of something gone wrong. An hour ago she had slipped away from the house and wandered out to the moor, feeling that today she must go somewhere quite alone to think. The time had come when it was no longer possible to drift with the tide. She must face the reality of the present in all its bald positiveness.

She had found a niche somewhere on the bluffs, partly sheltered from the open air, and had settled herself comfortably, her book on her knee. But now the sense of unforeseen calamity cut sharply through her dream, and she raised her eyes abruptly. What she saw struck her with sudden surprise, for where a moment before only the heavy day had hung around her, a wall of gray fog now shut her in, impenetrable as a magic circle.

Rosamund stared open-eyed, half frightened at the swiftness of the transformation. Then she sprang to her feet, as the menace of the situation was borne in upon her. She must find her way back at once before it became impossible. Surely she would have no difficulty in following the familiar path, even though the sight of it was now shut away from her.

She drew her cloak more closely around her, and hurried on in the direction of the Trench house, but almost at once she was out of the footway, to find it again after some desperate moments. Then, a few steps farther on, she lost it once more, this time irretrievably.

It was like walking in a nightmare. The hungry fog shut her in with an almost tangible menace, bidding her tempt her blind fate and go on at her peril. Bushes and heaps of stones loomed up suddenly out of nothingness, startlingly unfamiliar under their halo of haze. Presently she saw there was no help for it. She must remain where she was until the fog cleared away or someone

found her, for it was only too obviously useless to go on. She cowered down under her cloak. She was cold and tired. Her foot had been wrenched slightly on a turning pebble and had commenced to pain her.

How long she remained there she never knew. Perhaps she drowsed a little, to be summoned back presently to the world by the echo of a distant shout. She started to her knees, calling out loudly, and was answered at once, this time from a perceptibly nearer distance. Then the fog parted, and Hillman stood just below her at the foot of the embankment.

"I thought you might be up there," he said, with a note of relief in his voice. "I've been looking for you everywhere."

Rosamund turned to him with a cry of happiness. Now that the strain was over, she felt absurdly helpless and child-like as she sat there trying to keep back the nervous tears. Only one thought possessed her, the protection of his coming, and she held out her hands to him like a groping child.

"Stephen," she cried, unknowing that she called his name for the first time, "I knew you would find me! I'm glad, so glad you're here!"

Then in a moment, suddenly and without warning, the unforeseen happened. The girl's unguarded words had set the final match to the fire that had been smoldering in Hillman all unguessed for many days, while the appeal in her voice drew him to her with a passionate force beyond resistance. She would have recalled her speech, seeing his face change, but the mischief was done, and he was beside her in a single bound, one knee on the grass and her hands in his. Without the wish to resist, she turned to meet his eyes, compelled by his will and the mesmeric allure of youth; and in Hillman's dark gaze, Rosamund, fascinated, saw a sudden love of her flare up and burn with the strength of passion. She throbbed under it, not willing it otherwise, and drawn out of herself by the mastery of his personality and her own need of love.

A moment of love's allure, and their lips met, almost as if it were without

their own volition, very tenderly, very gently, as one might kiss a child, and yet with lips that lingered. Somehow it was like a touching of hearts, and Rosamund lay happily against his shoulder for a moment, upheld by the strength of his arm and conscious only of her new peace. Then they drew apart. But her question was answered. She loved him!

A sudden silence fell between them; then, as often happens with people who are not ready for love, Rosamund took up the thread of the commonplace.

"How did you happen to find me, Stephen?"

"I missed you up to the house when I came to dinner. Thought you were probably sick, but Mrs. Trench said she'd seen you going this way about eleven o'clock, and you hadn't come back. I thought perhaps you'd lost your way in the fog, so I didn't wait and started off to find you."

Rosamund shivered at the memory of her loneliness. "It was awfully good of you, boy. And I've made you miss your dinner, too!"

Hillman laughed. "Oh, that doesn't matter at all, now I've found you! Besides, Mrs. Trench is keeping something for us both. I asked her to. Just the same, little lady, you hadn't any business in the world being out on a day like this. And reading, too! You ought to have somebody take care of you."

"I suppose I ought," Rosamund said humbly.

"Yes, you ought; and now I'm going to get you home as soon as possible. I'm afraid you'll take cold, as it is."

When she tried to stand, her treacherous ankle throbbed so violently that walking was impossible. "I'm afraid I've hurt my foot," she said, paling.

"So I see." He stood thinking for a moment; then, half hesitating: "Would you mind if I carried you? I'm afraid I'll have to."

"No, only I hate to trouble you. I'm heavier than you'd think."

"Nonsense! You heavy, little lady? You're like a feather."

He picked her up gently, handling her

as carefully as if she were apt to break on touch, and made his way slowly down the embankment. Neither spoke often, Rosamund content and dwelling in the peace of his strength, and but once only did he touch on the matter nearest their hearts. Then it happened that when they were within sight of their destination he stopped abruptly as if struck by an unpleasant suggestion. "Little lady," he said, his voice suddenly troubled, "you won't think wrong of me?"

"No, no," Rosamund murmured, reading his thought; "it was all my fault."

But that he would by no means admit.

IV

ROSAMUND did not see Hillman again for several days, as her ankle proved painful and she was forced to stay in bed. Mrs. Trench came in to sit with her as often as she could spare the time, but for the most part she lay alone in her upstairs room, staring at the daffodils on the wall paper and trying to solve the problem that beset her.

She loved Hillman even as she had loved Roy—of that she could now have no doubt.

Lying there in her quiet room, she realized that her early passion had become a thing shut away in the dead past, a memory ineffably sweet and tender. But in the living present about her, the tendrils of her being had at last untwined themselves from the dead existence to which she had clung so long, and had reached up for support to the vital life so near her. It did not even seem a forgetfulness of the dead, only a maturer blossoming of that early love, for the very things that had drawn her to Roy now bound her irrevocably to Hillman. Two men, and yet the same passion, the mystery of the eternal type. For of the seed that Roy had sown, Stephen must now reap the harvest.

She was young; life claimed her; and she turned away from the dead to greet the living, and owned it best. But now an even graver problem awaited her.

The place beside Rosamund at table was vacant when she finally ventured downstairs, and she did not see Hillman again until the late afternoon. The few days' rest had entirely restored her strained ankle, and she was free to go where she chose, so the first hint of sunset found her curled up at the bottom of the lawn against a bowlder that jutted up from the lake edge. She had found among her possessions while she lay upstairs an old revolver Roy had given her long ago when he had tried to teach her to shoot, and she had brought it down with her to clean. The thing lay on her knee idly, as her dreaming eyes rested on the far gold distances.

A sudden step behind her made her turn her head to find Hillman beside her, and her first thought was of the change the last few days had wrought in him. Even that casual glance had shown her that the man's face was worn and saddened, and the lips had tightened into firmer lines.

"Glad to see you out again," he said.

Rosamund met his steady eyes brightly. "Yes, it is good to be downstairs. I got rather tired of lying up there so long. Being sick isn't a bit of fun."

The man nodded. "I should say not. By the way, what's that you've got there—a pistol?"

"Yes, just an old revolver. It's a little rusty now, and I was trying to clean it," Rosamund answered, holding it out to him. Hillman took it from her, carefully avoiding the touch of her fingers, and stood looking down at the thing with compressed lips that would otherwise have trembled.

"You ought to be pretty careful with this," he said presently; "it's a dangerous thing to have around. You don't keep it loaded, do you?"

Rosamund only laughed. "Oh, yes, usually; but I took the cartridges out just now to clean the cylinder. There they are in the box."

Without further speech he sat down beside her, and picking up the cartridges, fitted them into place; but it was easy to see that his thought wandered, and the shadow on his face had deepened. Pres-

ently he laid the loaded weapon carelessly on a nearby ledge of rock, and stretching himself on the grass at her feet, suddenly buried his face in his arms.

Rosamund watched him for a moment in silence, and then laid a gentle hand on his shoulder. "Stephen," she said very low, "there's something wrong. What is it, dear?"

For a moment he neither spoke nor moved; then he answered, looking away that he might not see her eyes. "Little girl, you haven't forgotten the last time I saw you?"

"No," she breathed, faint with the memory of that primal moment.

"Girl, do you know what it means? That I love you—that I want you for my wife!"

His voice shook and he ended abruptly. Rosamund sat motionless, without words. Then, very tenderly: "Dear, why shouldn't it be, when I, too, love you?"

The man raised his head, his eyes at last meeting hers. "Little lady," he asked, "did you know what you said just then? Because, if you did, it is as if I had asked for the best thing in the world and got it."

"Yes," she answered, "yes, my dear, I love you."

But he still questioned. "There was someone else? You told me that, little girl."

"Not now. That is over, dear love, shut away in the past. My love is all yours now, if you will take it."

"If I will take it! God, if you only knew!" He raised his head, looking out over the water with the somber eyes of mortal struggle. "But there are reasons why we can never be anything more to each other than we are now. If you'll think a moment, you'll know what they are."

"You mean the difference in our lives. Oh, my dear, my dear, you are quite, quite wrong! As if that would make the least change in my love for you!"

"Perhaps not; the difference would come afterwards. Let me ask you a question: Would you be willing to marry me?"

It was the girl's turn to be silent, and she sat there, moment after moment, with the scarlet of her anguish burning in her cheeks. Then suddenly she turned to him, throwing out her hands with a gesture of pain, as if seeking his protection against her trouble.

"Stephen, Stephen, I—don't know. If love were only all—but it isn't! It's the life afterwards that frightens me. Would we have happy?"

"That's what I'm afraid of," he answered steadily. "My people aren't your people, and I couldn't give you what you're used to."

But the girl shook her head. "That isn't what I mean. It's—I don't know how to say it—it's because we've been brought up so differently. We aren't fitted for each other's lives at all. Oh, Stephen, if love were only everything we need trouble about, it would all be so simple! Dear, help me!"

He drew her hand to him, feeling the tightening of her slender fingers on his, like those of a clinging child, but he did not yet dare to meet her eyes. "Little girl, I can never forgive myself if I've brought any trouble to you. I never meant to do that. Forget I ever told you I cared, and let us try to be friends again."

"No, no, it isn't possible! We can't forget!"

Hillman laughed harshly. "No, it can't be. I'd make you unhappy—I see that already. Girl, you don't know what it would mean to be my wife. Try and realize it!"

"I do realize it. It's that makes me afraid. Yet—Stephen, I can't give you up. I didn't know it, but my life has grown dependent on yours. And, yet—I'm afraid."

He shook his head again, his lips set. "No, little one, I can't let you be my wife. It wouldn't be fair to you. Brought up as you've been, I can't ask you to share my life. You don't know what it is. But I'll always have the best and purest thoughts of you, Rosamund, and the memory of one of the greatest things that ever came into my life, so you need feel no regret. God bless you, sweetheart!"

"Stephen, I love you!"

"My little lady!" His voice broke. "I wonder if it will ever be possible for you to know what giving you up means to me? It's really giving up my whole life. Without you I'll drift, probably from bad to worse, and end all sorts of a failure, unless I make an end of myself in the meantime. Yet I can't sacrifice you."

"There's no need."

"But I should feel it so." He turned on her suddenly, the flare of his passionate longing once more awake in his eyes. "Rosamund, my God, how I crave your love! And what will my life be without you? Don't tempt me too far. I've never been a good man, but I can't see you suffer for my selfish love, even if this is the only way to save you from me." And speaking, he half unconsciously raised the loaded weapon that lay beside him.

Rosamund, seeing the fascination of it grow and grow within his eyes, felt the swift touch of a terrible fear. Whether or not there was any intention of self-destruction in him she never knew, but the mortal terror of it was upon her, and she flung out her hands, grasping the weapon with the intensity of despair. For a moment Hillman resisted, using his strength against the powerlessness of hers, and then limply left the thing in her fingers as she drew back white and breathless. They faced each other silently almost defiantly, and then the man suddenly buried his face in his arms. But that instant of uncertainty had done its work. One more thing had been made clear to her—the utter impossibility of her life without Hillman, and she knew at last that she would never leave him.

A moment of silence lay between them. Then it was Rosamund who spoke. "Stephen," she cried, looking down on the bent dark head with a woman's passion of tenderness, "Stephen, you need me, dear!"

"Yes, God knows I need you," he answered.

A cry rose to her lips from her full heart. "Dear love, dear love, it isn't right, then, that I should give you up;

and I never will—because I love you, Stephen."

But for answer he only drew her hand down blindly to his lips.

V

ALL that night Rosamund lay awake, knowing that her resolve was taken, and yet torn by a dread of their ensuing future. And the morning found her white and dreary but not all unhappy.

It was a radiant day in late August. Hillman came for her in the early afternoon, and at first sight of him Rosamund was suddenly conscious of an abrupt change in the man. An atmosphere of unspoken event hung about him palpably, and already he bore himself with more authority, as one conscious of his own strength. Something which she did not know had come to him since yesterday. Rosamund wondered what it might be.

He said nothing of it, just at first, and together they wandered, almost in unbroken silence, along the strip of beach and on into the farther pine woods, though always with that unspoken thing between them. Then, after a time, Rosamund's treacherous ankle played her false, and she was forced to rest at the foot of a tall pine.

Very gently Hillman's arm slipped about the girl, scarcely holding her in its touch, and she laid her cheek against his shoulder like a child waiting to be comforted. Then Hillman spoke, as if suddenly awakened to reality. "Little lady, I'm afraid this is good-bye. I'm going away."

"Stephen!"

"Yes. Queer, isn't it, how things happen? Yesterday I hadn't anything in the world to offer you, not even my future. This morning I found a letter for me at the post-office. Hadn't any idea what was in it until I opened it."

"What was it?" she asked a little breathlessly.

Hillman's glance turned away from her, lingering on the far-off glimpse of water. "You remember that pal of

mine I told you was looking out for me in Oklahoma? I never thought he'd really do it, never dreamed he meant it; but I was wrong. He's struck it pretty rich down there, and he wants to take me into partnership with him—needs another man to help him out. Little lady, it's the chance of my life, and I mean to take it. It isn't an easy job, but it means big money some day, and I can't afford to let it slip."

"No, my dear, you can't indeed," she said gently. "It means luck for you at last."

He looked away, his lip quivering. "Rosamund, I never had anything to offer you before, and I haven't much now. You've been awfully good to me, too good, God knows, and I can't go away without offering you what little I have. I know what you must think of me for even daring to hope for such a thing, but before telling you good-bye for always I can't help asking you to be my wife."

Very bravely he waited for the word that was to part them forever, very steadily but with set lips. But on the girl a sudden light had broken. Out there in a new land, where in the beginnings of things the barriers of caste are not yet built and all men are free and equal, she saw the fulfillment of her dream, the full accomplishment of their common life. There, where success is proportionate only to native strength, her man might hold up his head with the best and her pride be vindicated. For it was never the life itself she feared, only that bitter humiliation at the hands of her class.

To be his wife! Suddenly she turned toward Hillman with a cry, half sob, half laughter, both hands outstretched. "Stephen, Stephen, thank God, the way is clear at last and there's nothing to be afraid of any longer! Oh, my dear, my dear, take me, if you really want me, for your country shall be my country, your God mine!"



BEYOND HER

By J. J. O'CONNELL

SHE'S learned to smoke a cigarette—
Not make believe; she goes a whole one—
But though she smokes it I will bet
That she will never learn to roll one.



OF two evils the wise man chooses the one with the most money.



YOU can't always measure women's troubles by their sighs.

WITH MEMORY IN MAY

By GRACE AGNES ZIMMERMAN

BY meadow brook and hillside
And many a woodland way,
How pleasantly I wandered
With Memory in May!
So wondrously the wildwood
Beguiled me as a guest,
The very heart of childhood
Came back into my breast.

But when the spell was broken,
And when the dream had passed,
How wistfully I wandered
With Memory at last!
For transitory gleaming,
More deep all shadows be;
A little while, in seeming,
My dead had walked with me!



WANDERLUST

By J. M. MOORE

MY heart is a tall wood,
With the wind always going in the top of the trees,
Swayed to a yearning, restless mood
By the voices that call in the wandering breeze.
Wind voices are calling, calling, calling—
Calling of mystic seas,
Calling of far white sands,
Calling of wild, bare lands;
Low through the restless trees
Wind voices are calling.
My heart is a tall wood
And the wind always going in the top of the trees.

THE SECOND MRS. ROEBUCK

By W. CAREY WONDERLY

AS the hall clock chimed nine, Mrs. Roebuck entered the pretty breakfast room, and with a cheery "Good morning, Katherine," slipped quietly into her place at the table.

Katherine raised her eyes and let her glance rest for the briefest moment upon her father's wife opposite her. Then, with a colorless "Good morning, Mrs. Roebuck," she picked up her letter again and calmly read it over a second time.

Mrs. Roebuck sighed. She knew Katherine had never forgiven her for having married her father. Mabel Mack had been Samuel Roebuck's typist, and they had been married seven months. She was rather a tall woman, well built, blonde of coloring, and twenty-six years old. Katherine, who was a few years her junior, was petite and brunette.

Having finished her letter, Katherine put it back in its envelope and took up another. She always read her correspondence at the breakfast table, while she sipped a cup of English tea and nibbled a crust of toast. Mrs. Roebuck, who was fond of her meals and frankly enjoyed her breakfast each morning, ate her second lamb chop and idly watched her husband's daughter as she read letter after letter, scarcely touching even her tea and toast.

When at last the silence had become almost unbearable and she felt she could stand it no longer, Mrs. Roebuck saw Katherine take up an envelope, the writing on which was strikingly familiar. She looked again. Katherine had taken out the letter, and the pink-white envelope, with the big bold letters across its face, was laid beside her plate. Mrs.

Roebuck moved uncomfortably. Yes, the writing was his; the letter was from Francis Carryl.

She pushed aside her coffee, and wholly unconscious of what she did, stared frowningly across at Katherine. The girl was so young, so charming and so innocent, and Francis Carryl was—well, a thorough man of the world.

He was an actor, a man whose name stood for much in his profession, and whose following, especially among the other sex, was little short of marvelous. He was a wonderful so-called "matinee idol." Women crowded at the stage entrance to see him pass out; the sales of his photographs alone brought him in a comfortable income.

Again she looked across the table at Katherine, and this time her full, red lips curled ever so slightly.

"I'll bet Sam doesn't know about this," she said to herself. Then, directly: "Of course he doesn't! He'd never get over it—Katherine writing to *him*. Sly thing! I tell you, all women need watching."

She finished her coffee, after all, and Katherine, having read the letter, laid it aside and took up another. Then, putting her elbows upon the table, Mrs. Roebuck spoke—carelessly, apropos of nothing.

"I think I'll go to the matinee this afternoon," she said. "I've got nothing special to do."

Katherine glanced up, smiled slightly and returned:

"Yes? 'Mamie, the Beautiful Saleslady,' or—what?"

"What," said Mrs. Roebuck blandly. Katherine laughed softly, and gathering up her letters, rose from the table and turned to go.

Mrs. Roebuck called her.

"Katherine!"

"Yes?" The girl stopped, turning in the doorway, the faintest gleam of hauteur in her eyes.

"Ever see Francis Carryl?" asked Mrs. Roebuck. Her face was expressionless. She had a way, that she had learned in Samuel Roebuck's office, of presenting an expressionless face to the gaping world.

Now, watching her, Katherine thought her positively idiotic in appearance, and wondered, as she had done a hundred times before, why her father had ever married her.

"Yes, I've seen Francis Carryl," she answered quietly.

"Any good?"

Again Katherine Roebuck laughed outright. Surely her father's wife was a strange person—she had brought the very air of the brokerage offices in Broad Street to her drawing-room in Madison Avenue.

"What do you mean by 'any good,' please?" she asked pointedly. "I'm afraid I don't always catch your meaning, Mrs. Roebuck."

Mabel Roebuck, who was no fool, laughed good-naturedly, and said that the joke was on her.

"I mean," she explained, "is Carryl worth seeing?"

Katherine turned to go.

"Yes, if one appreciates his kind of plays," she said. "To some persons I would recommend a vaudeville, but Mr. Carryl is rather good—in his way."

"I guess I won't go," said Mrs. Roebuck slowly.

When Katherine had gone, with a slight shrug of her shoulders, Mrs. Roebuck smiled feebly. She was amused at her, too, for the girl, despite the few years' difference in their ages, had seen so little of life and had lived scarcely at all, while all her own six and twenty years had been filled to the crowding point.

"I've earned my own bread and butter for the last ten years," she laughed. "There hasn't always been butter, maybe, but still—I wonder just what kind of a fool Katherine is?"

She did not see her again during the morning and as Katherine was lunching with some friends near the Park, Mrs. Roebuck ate her own luncheon alone in state. There was a good deal of the typist still about her, and it filled her soul with joy to be able to order whatever she happened to fancy without first having to consult the price marked on a menu card and mentally counting the money in her purse. Lobster salad, panned oysters, roast duck, ice cream, apple pie were consumed with thorough enjoyment. It was only when alone and Katherine away that Mrs. Roebuck indulged herself with her favorite dishes. At other times Katherine did the ordering, and Mrs. Roebuck stood meekly aside and wondered why in the world people ate lamb cutlets and a fruit salad for luncheon, when there were such things to be had as lobster and ice cream.

She was ready to leave for the theater at two o'clock. Personally, she liked to arrive early and sit in her orchestra chair eating caramels and watching the house fill, but for the sake of her gowns she had formed the habit of late of bustling in just a minute or so before the curtain rose.

She looked very handsome this afternoon, if a trifle showy. She was tall and generously proportioned and blonde, and she wore a blue velvet princess gown with a large white-plumed hat and the silver fox furs Samuel Roebuck had bought her on her last birthday. She thought she looked like an actress, and she did, but not the kind she fondly imagined.

The house was darkened when she was ushered to her chair, and she was glad for once, because she felt very sure that Katherine was there, and she did not want the girl to see her.

The play was stupid enough, she thought. It was an English drawing-room comedy, as light as a butterfly's wing, and Mrs. Roebuck, whose taste ran in another direction, was openly bored. Only the names of the characters interested her, for like the Britisher, she dearly loved a lord, and titles were as plentiful as showers in April in Francis Carryl's comedy.

And then, strangely enough, Mrs. Roebuck did not go into ecstasies over Mr. Carryl. She watched him with coldly indifferent eyes, and while her common sense told her that he must appear quite fascinating to her own sex, she despised the pretty little woman next her who murmured "Oh-h-h!" every time he came on to take a curtain call after the second act.

She could not find Katherine in the house. She searched the theater with her gold and ivory opera glasses, and put them away again with a frown.

"I thought sure Katherine would be here," she said to herself. "I wish I had gone to a vaudeville show myself—this thing is awful."

But she sat quietly in her seat until the curtain fell on the last act, and then, making her way slowly out to the lobby waited there a few minutes in the hope of seeing the girl. But when the last matinee girl had passed out and the attendants came to close the doors, she gave up her search and went into the street.

It was a quarter to five, and at the corner she could see the steady ebb and flow of Broadway after a matinee. A waiting taxicab was standing just below the theater; she motioned, the chauffeur came up and she entered the car.

Up Broadway she was driven to a quiet side street where the houses were all strongly alike, and where few people found their way unless purposely seeking the place. At a house well down the block the cab stopped. Mrs. Roebuck descended, paid the fare and went quickly up the steps.

How well she remembered every little thing about the house! Even the manservant who opened the door for her was the same—and she had not entered the house for six years!

"Well, Edwards, you don't know me, I see," she said.

For a moment he looked at her with an almost human glance in his eyes; then the air of the discreet servant enveloped him again.

"It's Miss Mabel, I do declare!" he said. "Well, you have changed some—Mrs. Roebuck now, isn't it?"

"Yes, Mrs. Samuel Roebuck," she returned proudly. "My husband is the senior member of the firm of Roebuck & Winter—you've heard of 'em, of course. Well, Edwards, I want to see Mr. Carryl. I'll go in and wait for him—he isn't home yet, I guess. Nobody in the library, is there?"

"No, miss—ma'am—but—"

"But what?" she demanded.

He lowered his eyes discreetly.

"You know Mr. Carryl, Miss Mabel," he said apologetically. "And you never can tell what will happen. You would be more comfortable upstairs in his sitting room, I think."

"No, I'll wait down here, Edwards," she said, pushing aside the curtains and walking into the tastefully furnished library. "If anybody calls to see Mr. Carryl I'll slip out the back door."

Edwards left her there, for there seemed nothing else to do, and he knew Mabel Mack of old; but he lingered in the hall and listened ever on the alert for the street bell.

Mrs. Roebuck, in the library, threw aside her furs and sat down before the logwood fire. Nothing was changed in the room. She remembered everything about the place, the heavy rugs, the excellent pictures, the choice books, the air of taste and luxury displayed at every turn. A bitter little smile curled her full lips and she said aloud:

"Oh, you Francis Carryl!"

At the same instant the bell rang out sharply, and she heard Edwards go down the hall past the library door. She rose and went toward the small door at the end of the room, ready to vacate at a moment's notice.

It was Katherine. She had felt that it was she before she saw her slight girlish figure come quickly through the Japanese curtains, but now, when she saw her with her own eyes, a slight shiver ran down Mrs. Roebuck's back. It seemed incredible—Katherine there in that house!

Mrs. Roebuck moved back well behind a huge, old-fashioned settle, so that Katherine did not see her when, with a hurried little glance around the room, she pulled off her coat and gloves.

She was very simply dressed. Her gown, her hat, her furs were all inconspicuous and modest. The method in her madness Mrs. Roebuck appreciated certainly, for her red lips smiled contemptuously as she watched her. Katherine! Mrs. Roebuck, who was no fool, despite the fact that she was never very positive about the way to take her consommé, wondered what in the world her husband and Katherine's father would say—and do—if he knew the girl was here in Francis Carryl's house. The thought frightened her. She was very fond of Samuel Roebuck, and she was proud of Katherine, who stood for everything correct and proper in her eyes. She didn't want anything to happen to Katherine, both for her own sake and the sake of Samuel Roebuck.

She moved uneasily. Katherine had seated herself in a great, cushioned chair before the fire, and was warming her gloveless hands.

Mrs. Roebuck had come here this afternoon with but one feeling upmost in her breast—to learn something that she might use against Katherine. The girl had made her married life very unpleasant, and Mrs. Roebuck had a notion of "getting even" with her. From the moment she saw Carryl's letter in Katherine's hands until she saw her walk through the Japanese curtains a few minutes before, the one thought with her had been revenge. She knew the girl had not approved of her father's marriage; she saw every day that Katherine regarded her as little above the servants, and, again, Katherine had never introduced her to any of her friends. Now, however, Mrs. Roebuck had something against her that would force her to act differently—when she had seen Katherine enter the library she could have screamed aloud with joy. She would *force* Katherine to change her tactics, or she would tell her father of her visit to Francis Carryl.

She had seen enough. She moved noiselessly toward the back door, intending to leave the house without Katherine seeing her there. But as she stole breathlessly across the crowded room space, her skirts caught in an Antoinette

table, a frail, delicate, gilded bit loaded down with trifles, and it toppled over, crashing down to the floor.

She started guiltily—the noise brought Katherine to her feet. There followed a moment of silence, during which both women stared stupidly at each other.

Katherine, startled, though she was the first to recover herself, smiled a little, even when she was forced to lean against her chair back for support.

"Mrs. Roebuck! This *is* a surprise!" she said steadily.

"Katherine—you!" gasped Mrs. Roebuck. She was terribly flurried, and she knew not what to say.

"Yes, it is I," smiled Katherine.

Mrs. Roebuck recovered herself sufficiently to wipe the beads of moisture from her forehead with a tiny lace handkerchief, and then she crossed over, and taking up Katherine's coat and gloves, thrust them into her unwilling hands.

"Come, we must go home—quickly!" she said.

"My dear Mrs. Roebuck—"

"Never mind that. Come on before *he* gets home," said Mrs. Roebuck hurriedly. "It's nearly six o'clock now, and he will be here at any moment. He mustn't find you here."

Katherine frowned.

"Pray, who is 'he'?" she asked with hauteur.

"Francis Carryl, of course!" answered Mrs. Roebuck. "Katherine, he—he isn't a—a nice sort of man for you to know."

"You surprise me," sneered Katherine. "Especially since I find you here—you, my father's wife! I came here to see Mr. Carryl—so did you, from all aspects; but I am not sneaking off home when I discover that another person is also waiting to see him."

Mrs. Roebuck flushed crimson, for Katherine had a way of saying things that cut deeply.

"I didn't come to see Mr. Carryl," she said slowly.

"Of course not," smiled Katherine.

"No, I didn't. I came here to see you. You got a letter from Francis Carryl this morning. I recognized the writing

on the envelope—and it seemed to me that he must be asking you to come here. It is a way he has. So I came, hoping to find you here, and then go away, having something always over your head to compel you to treat me differently. That is it—everything! I meant to threaten to tell Sam—to tell your father—about this visit, unless you changed in your treatment of me. But as I was about to leave, I upset the table. I didn't come to see Francis Carryl, Katherine."

"Of course not," repeated Katherine, smiling.

"You don't believe me?" flashed Mrs. Roebuck.

"It would scarcely be polite to say I didn't believe you, Mrs. Roebuck," cried Katherine, shrugging her shoulders.

Mrs. Roebuck bit her lips.

"It makes no difference to me myself what you think of me," she said, "but it does make a difference to me what you think of Sam Roebuck's wife. I happen to be his wife—and I've got to be above suspicion—like that man's wife in history—I don't know his name; I'm not up on those things. I came here to see you meet Francis Carryl. I knew you would. Young girls always come to see him. Then I thought I'd have something against you, something you wouldn't want anybody to know, and I meant to use it to force you to treat me as—as an equal, not as a servant. I may not be up on the society racket, like you are, Katherine, but I've earned my own living for ten years, and your father paid me twenty dollars a week when I was his typist. You couldn't earn twenty dollars a week to save your life. I've never done a thing like this in my life—come to a man's house as you have come here today—and I surely am not going to start it when I'm happily married to such a man as Sam Roebuck."

"Really, you are displaying quite unexpected powers," yawned Katherine. "Of course, it would be very foolish indeed of you to come to see Mr. Carryl, but it is the foolish things we most often do in life, Mrs. Roebuck."

"You mean—you don't believe what I've said?" gasped Mrs. Roebuck.

"Something like that," smiled Katherine serenely.

Her very brazen air both frightened and horrified Mrs. Roebuck. She didn't know what to make of it. She had expected tears and pleas for mercy, promises without number, vows of eternal gratitude; but instead, Katherine boldly faced her unmoved, and tried to place her, Mrs. Roebuck, in the wrong.

"Katherine," she said, "I am telling you the truth. You must believe me. I did *not* come here to see Francis Carryl."

"I did," said Katherine.

"Yes, you did, but I—"

"Yes, I know," cried Katherine airily. "You came to see Mr. Carryl's valet."

Every drop of blood left Mrs. Roebuck's face and she was colorless to the lips. For a moment she stood undecided. Then she went quietly to the telephone in the corner and spoke into it a number:

"Gramercy 6234!"

Katherine, who had been listening with a mocking smile on her features, turned suddenly and faced the quiet, determined woman at the telephone.

"Mrs. Roebuck!" she cried. "You are 'phoning—"

"Yes. I am 'phoning to your father," nodded Mrs. Roebuck calmly.

"But—" began Katherine, rising quickly and coming toward her. "I wouldn't do that—"

Mrs. Roebuck raised her hand, and checking her speech, turned to talk to her husband, who had just answered her call.

"This is Mabel, Sam," she said distinctly. "I am at Mr. Francis Carryl's house in Brook Street, and I want you to come here immediately. Come right away, won't you? ... Important? Yes. Good-bye!"

She hung up the transmitter, and moving quietly over to a window that looked out on the street, sat down and waited. Katherine followed her.

"Why did you telephone to father, Mrs. Roebuck?" she asked.

"Because I wanted him to come here and to decide—you are to tell him your side of the story, and I will tell him mine," Mrs. Roebuck replied. "Then

he will decide who is speaking the truth—whether I came here to pay Mr. Carryl a visit or to see *you* pay Mr. Carryl a visit. That's all, Katherine."

"Oh—h! Well—I think I will go myself. I never cared for scenes—they are so middle class," said Katherine. "*Au revoir.*"

Mrs. Roebuck rose and blocked her way.

"No, you won't go, Katherine," she said. "You will not leave this room until your father comes. Sit down."

"A prisoner? My dear Mrs. Roebuck, this is too absurd!" the girl cried.

Mrs. Roebuck walked to the bell and pressed the button. A second later Edwards appeared in the door.

"Edwards," she said, "lock the hall door, please. And some lights in here."

When he had gone, Katherine turned to her with suspicious eyes. "You are evidently on very familiar terms with the servant," she sneered.

"Not familiar terms, Katherine," Mrs. Roebuck smiled. "Remember you are speaking of your father's wife. But I have known Edwards for a good many years, even as I know this house and this room we are sitting in."

Katherine leaned her chin in her palm and regarded her coldly.

"I always thought there was something mysterious about you," she said slowly. "Father had little to say about you other than that you were his typist. What are you to Francis Carryl—what have you been—speak!"

Her dark eyes blazed dangerously, and she suddenly sprang to her feet and began to pace the room. Once a little sob escaped her, but when Mrs. Roebuck would have gone to her, she waved her off angrily.

"I hate you!" she repeated again and again.

Mrs. Roebuck looked at her compassionately.

"Poor little girl!" she said to herself. "Does it hurt so? I hardly thought she loved him—oh, Francis Carryl—but I, least of all, can judge you!"

Presently Katherine looked up.

"This will hurt father cruelly," she said. "He—he is rather proud of me. I

hate to have him know I'd do so—so *bourgeois* a thing; but I meant no harm—I swear it. I only came to see Mr. Carryl—to talk with him. I admire him immensely. Still, I am ready to stand my punishment if—"

She did not finish her sentence, for the street bell rang impatiently, and they heard Edwards hurry down the hall to answer it.

"Father!" said Katherine paling.

Mrs. Roebuck shook her head. "Not yet. He hasn't had time to get here," she said "It's Mr. Carryl, I think."

She went to the door, and parting the curtains, looked out into the hall. Edwards was whispering to his master. A slight shade of annoyance crossed Mrs. Roebuck's face.

"Mr. Carryl, please," she said.

He turned, saw her and followed her back to the library. There, at sight of Katherine, he stopped, thoroughly nonplussed.

He was a tall, well made, handsome man, with snow white hair and very black eyes. He was always faultlessly groomed, and tonight he still wore the evening clothes he had worn in his play, with a heavy fur-lined topcoat over them.

Both women watched him with different emotions. In spite of herself, Katherine's heart beat wildly. Mrs. Roebuck's face flushed as she noticed his very poise, which in itself was theatrical. Her lips parted slightly and she sighed.

Presently he spoke—in a singularly musical voice, soft, rich, caressing.

"My dear ladies, I am deeply honored by this visit," he said, bowing. He brought a chair and placed it for Mrs. Roebuck, but she shook her head.

"We are going home," she said. "I only wanted to see you a moment. I want you to tell Miss Roebuck what relationship exists between us."

"My dear Mrs. Roebuck—" he began, smiling.

She cut him short.

"I am—what?" she cried impatiently.

"Be quick; we must go. My husband is coming for me, and I expect him every minute." Carryl glanced over his shoul-

der at the door. Mrs. Roebuck's words were, to say the least, discomfoting.

"Remember your promise, Mabel," he reminded her.

"As for that, I took back my promise ten years ago when you left us penniless—yes, penniless!" said Mrs. Roebuck scornfully. "Not that I am any more willing than you to have the truth known, but now I must have you say it. After tonight never again will I willingly see you; but now, I am—"

Carryl glanced first at her and then at Katherine, and then, between set teeth, he answered:

"You are my daughter."

That was all. There was a death-like stillness for a moment, during which nobody moved. Then Katherine gave way to a little hysterical sob, and Mrs. Roebuck went to her.

"Come," she said kindly. "We'll wait on the steps for your father. He'll be here in a minute or two, surely. Don't,

don't, dear! Hush; not a word shall Sam know—trust me."

She helped her with her coat and gave her her gloves, and then, with a colorless little "Good-bye," Mrs. Roebuck led the girl out of the house.

They stood, waiting, on the top step. Only a moment, however, and then the Roebuck brougham came down the street with Samuel Roebuck seated inside. When he saw his wife and daughter he came quickly to them.

"Well?" he asked. "Nothing wrong? Mabel—Katherine! Anything wrong?"

"No, not a thing wrong, Sam," cried his wife brightly. "Don't worry; I'll tell you all about it later. Now take us home quickly, please—we're starved to death!"

He sprang forward to open the carriage door for them, but Katherine drew Mrs. Roebuck gently to her.

"Oh, Mabel!" she cried. "Forgive me!"



FORGOTTEN

By NELLE RICHMOND EBERHART

I ASKED of thee when thou didst start that day

Alone, yet brave, upon the star-marked trail,
If possible thou wouldst come back to say
That life and love avail.

So here within the twilight hush I bow;
Heart-wrung, I listen with strained, sharpened ear;
If thou art calling me, if thou art calling now,
I do not, cannot hear.

Dear heart, am I forgotten in that land?
Or led the trail where fated waters flow?
Or is my sense too gross to understand?
Ah, shall I ever know?

SAWS FOR THE GOOSE

By HAROLD SUSMAN

WHILE MRS. GABBINGTON talks, MR. GABBINGTON reads aloud from a book of proverbs.

MRS. GABBINGTON.—And the idea of Mrs. Pouterborough giving a party and not inviting me! Not—inviting—*me*—who received her when nobody else did—who received her when nobody else would! And now—she evidently does not receive *me*! I evidently am not good enough for her! Oh, it is outrageous! It is infamous!

MR. GABBINGTON (*reading aloud*)—"Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned—"

MRS. GABBINGTON.—She intended it for an insult! But I take it as a compliment! Yes, indeed, I'm glad she didn't invite me! I'm glad I was saved the trouble of declining to go! For decline I certainly would—seeing that she had Mrs. Fitzhuskinson there, and Mrs. McNicolby! What society!

MR. GABBINGTON (*reading aloud*)—"The grapes are sour,' said the Fox, when he found that he could not reach them—"

MRS. GABBINGTON.—Mrs. Fitzhuskinson goes about with a man old enough to be her father. It is ridiculous! Is that all she can get? And Mrs. McNicolby goes about with a boy young enough to be her son. It is disgusting! Is that all she can get? And as for Mrs. Pouterborough herself—well, she goes around with old men and young men and middle-aged men! And people say very funny things about her!

MR. GABBINGTON (*reading aloud*)—"All seems yellow to the jaundiced eye—"

MRS. GABBINGTON.—Why, I don't believe that you have been listening to what I have been saying!

MR. GABBINGTON.—And I don't believe that you have been listening to what I have been reading.

MRS. GABBINGTON.—Listening to you? Of course I haven't! I have been too busy listening to myself! I have no time to waste with—what is it? A book of proverbs! Good gracious! What a thing to read! And here I have been telling you how I have been insulted, and how furious I am, and how I take it as a compliment, and how delighted I am! Because I don't care to associate with—

MR. GABBINGTON (*reading aloud*)—"Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise."

THE INCOMPARABLE CHARM

By JOHN REGNAULT ELLYSON

THE light wind blew the frisky little thing down Ninth Street toward the painter and the broker.

"Lord, do you see that?" asked Movey.

"What?"

"There—no, here."

"The leaf?" said Lord.

"Bosh! Do trees shed in May?"

The painter had discovered the character of the paper. The crumpled note, still dancing very much like a leaf, caught between the broker's feet.

"A ten-spot and yours—of course," said Movey.

The broker looked down and opened his heels, and the note again fluttered. The artist would have plunged after it, had his companion not laid a hand on his arm.

"Don't," insisted Tom Lord.

"Don't yourself—you pinch. It's just the figure I want and—look!"

They watched the greenish wisp's buffoon capers. It disported as though bewitched, went speeding or slacked pace, twirled or paused, jumped after a running newsboy, tapped a policeman's heel, dodged a dog's nose, cut under the snarling electric car, measured the base of the Chamber of Commerce and then by jerks rebounded over the curbstone. It touched lightly or scurried past no less than twenty people, not one of whom recognized its value.

"Who's the old chap at the verge of the gutter?" asked Lord.

"Don't remember the name—but he lodges across from me."

"I see now," said Lord; "it's Colonel Byrd."

"Oh, yes, and a bird he is—the Colonel!"

It was he who stooped down and picked up the note. He did the feat clumsily and broke no bones. The dip and the rise gave him undue color and a vision of flashing lights. He breathed hard, braced himself an instant against his cane and then immediately ducked his head and struck out for Rueger's in a direct line—as a bee goes, or a crow.

"He hit the sunshine that time," said Movey, plucking at his little mustache—an ornament which Elaine in a jolly mood had christened, "your third eyebrow," the three being of a size.

Lord made no comment. He turned and looked at Movey's neckscarf, in which there was certainly nothing in the least remarkable. Intent and handsome, his left hand in his pocket, he might have been regarding the Bank of England or a sunset on the Nile through the loose fold of the dark tie.

Then he lifted his brow. He had a pair of fine gray eyes—keen and clear and cool. Movey's eyes, warm and brown, were as velvety as his little landscapes. Both men smiled, one thinking of his wife's eyes—the duplicates before him, and the other thinking of Elaine's—the sparkling mates to those of his best friend.

But Lord had, also, something else in mind. He took from his pocket three ten-dollar bills and slipped them into the painter's long fingers.

"Hang me, Tom, did I say I needed anything?"

"There," said Lord; "pass them back."

"Oh, no; you're too free with such treasures."

"And you—you're an anomaly, a genuine chimera."

"All that?" said Movey.

"A queer fish—artist and close-fisted."

"Thanks."

"I say, Dick, did you ever really lose a piece of money?"

"Never in my life that I can recall. Why?"

"Or throw any out of the window?"

"Heavens—never!"

"I thought so. That's what's the matter. Come, let's go up and lunch at Rueger's."

"Just what I was about to remark."

"Come along, then," said Lord.

"We'll take a quiet corner and I'll tell you something."

They sauntered up Ninth Street from Main. The broker and the painter were well dressed men. Both had striking figures and much besides—marked individuality, easy manners, the buoyant, elastic step, shapely heads, hair trimmed in the mode and wits under their hats.

The wits of the broker carried him along the upper levels with wealth attained and unshadowed love and happiness. The artist's wits led him round and about, uphill and down, here seeking color and acquiring mastery, there working royally, putting the veritable magic of nature in little canvases seven by twelve, doing portraiture without magic for necessary cash, living a rugged, soulful, deliberately independent life by faith and choice, and swearing secretly and sometimes aloud that none under the sun could match Elaine—the dainty lady with the cool, gray, marvelous eyes.

II

ACROSS the rooms at Rueger's, planted as though for the day, was the semi-genteel, stout, "old chap." The Colonel sat there with the world before him—a tumbler filled with cracked ice and amber liquor and mint, in the midst of which a hollowed straw pointed toward high hopes. It was already his second glass, and many more were

at his command. He had recovered his afternoon cheek blossoms and in some degree a feeling of uplift, and consequently poured forth benedictions on the unknown that had set the heavens within his grasp.

Movey, from their corner apart, was the first to observe the Colonel.

"Big luck. Quite happy now."

Lord smiled. "Yesterday I overheard the Colonel say: Will times ever improve? One can't make enough nowadays to buy whiskey and bread."

"Whiskey and bread. Jove, entirely a new order. Honestly, did the Colonel ever do anything? When did he ever make ends meet?"

"Before the war."

"How—law or physic?"

"Black traffic."

"What—not a pirate?"

"No; he traded in negroes," said Lord.

And thereupon the Colonel was disposed of with a shrug.

Movey relished the luncheon Lord had ordered, and chatted. Over the wine he gave an account of last week's work—an uninterrupted, vivid monologue, and then Lord began:

"Dick," he said.

"Well, Tom?"

"I've been of slight service to you once in a while?"

"That you have, dear boy."

"You're all of a man and square and lovable, but somehow it seems you don't meet me halfway."

"I? Stuff and nonsense."

"You promised to attack me when strapped—"

"Yes—yes, very true; haven't I?"

"Sometimes. You work hard, follow your art with immense devotion. You've pictures in New York—half a dozen, eh?"

"Five—with Solomon Schnitz."

"And still more completed in your den?"

"Seven unexhibited—yes."

"These are enough; stop and take a respite. You're pinched around the nose and black under the eyes, broken up and run down. Take a turn off now and rest and play."

"Good heavens, you're dreaming, Tom! I'm all right—I've just begun. My little landscapes will yet touch the popular nerve. Wait a year or so—only wait till the portrait fad dies. I must stick to portraits myself for a while, though they are positive abominations."

"Yes, exactly. Your portraits are simply inhuman. Mine's confounded patchwork—"

"Thanks, thanks. I'm glad you agree with me."

"And I paid double—fully double, I believe."

"Remark, please, that it took me twice as long as the Governor's."

"But consider the Governor's!"

"I do—I did. The very worst, and it got back on my hands."

"Say—can't you let portraits alone in the future?"

"My! How? Well—maybe. There's the Senator's daughters'—almost done. This puts me easy, and I hope something will turn up—then."

"Something—perhaps a funeral," said Lord.

"What, do you think so? I'll get into the papers, and my precious jewels go under the hammer with 'here's a truly lovely cowshed in the midst of appletrees going at the sorry figure of a mere song—'"

"Will you allow me a word?" said Lord. "Last year I proposed a trip abroad at my expense. Declined. I've repeatedly asked you to take a block sum of money. Declined. I flung open my house to save you the trouble of house rent and board. Declined with a snort. What can I do—what can I suggest that your doggedness will approve? Suppose I offer you a wife; would you accept?"

Dick Movey had the wine glass at his lips. He set it down and scowled. "Tom, you're a fool. Your wife's the most charming woman I ever met except one—"

"Not so loud. Do you remember my wife's portrait?"

"Pray, don't mention it."

"I thought you'd like to have it back on your hands."

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"Excuse me. But, dear old boy, your wife's so ideal, so charming—you shouldn't jest—"

"I'm not jesting. I didn't say my wife—I said a wife. But, even if you accept and Elaine accepts and I, how could you take proper care of the lady?"

Movey planted both elbows on the table. "Tom, dear, do you imagine there's the least—least possible chance?"

"The least—unless you think fit to paint her portrait."

"Oh, but how she loves nature, landscapes—field and sun and water—"

"And three meals a day," said Lord. "That brings round the subject again—the ten-dollar note."

"How's that? I didn't catch— Oh, certainly." And his eyes went across the room to the semi-genteel Colonel.

Lord refilled the glasses and observed quietly:

"The man at the other end of the note knew what he was doing."

"Who? What man?"

"I couldn't say, but he knew."

"I know what I do when I drop a brush—"

"You curse your luck, don't you?"

"Precisely and roundly," said Movey.

"That's what the man did *before* he dropped the note."

The artist laughed. "The deuce! And how did you find out?"

"Now, Dick, think what you will, but I won't have you laugh at what I say. You'll attract attention and someone will join us. This little confession is strictly confidential."

Movey pulled at his mustache. "Of course. Yes, I'll keep my mouth shut."

"Well," said Lord, steady of eye and with gravity, "the man dropped the note to change his luck."

"Did he? Singular idea! Never heard of that—quite singular, quite new!"

"As a matter of fact," said Lord, "it's as old as the hills—one of innumerable old charms."

"Oh, I say, Tom, do you believe in charms?"

"I believe in my wife, in the talents of my friend and in my luck."

"Good! But no, you don't believe in charms? I'm put in mind of what an old fellow did for me once. Did I ever tell you? When a boy, I had seven warts on my right hand that I couldn't get rid of. The old chap, my father's miller, one morning took my hand, touched the warts and seven days after they disappeared. In a small way it was quite singular and quite absurd—a fact, nevertheless."

"Do you know how he performed the spell?"

"I? Bless me, no! Do you?"

"Simple as A—B—C. He counted your warts and tied seven knots in a string and lost the string."

The artist tossed back his head, but before he could give vent to his amusement his friend cut him short.

"That's what he did. You say the result was satisfactory?"

"Oh, yes—but, Tom, permit me to smile."

"And this brings us again to the ten-dollar note," said Lord.

"You mean some man threw the banknote out of the window?"

"I mean he tucked the bill loosely in the edge of his vest pocket or carelessly up his sleeve and then dropped it—knowing that he should, but not knowing when. In a word, he lost it."

"You don't say so! I see the point—"

"No; you think you do, but it isn't the same thing. Suppose you had picked up that particular note?"

"Suppose—heavens, would the sky have fallen?"

"I should have been vexed, and you would have gone minus treble the amount, a good luncheon and a valuable conversation."

"Are you so whimsical? I never dreamed you had any but generous impulses."

"It wouldn't have been my fault, but yours."

"Mine? How?"

The broker ignored the question. "As we came up here," said he, "I mentioned that I'd tell you something.

I followed the old method. But you haven't a head for assimilating hints and suggestions—I've known that for a long time, and I shouldn't have wasted my time."

"Pretty plain talk," said Movey. "Pretty plain talk is what I like. Rip on, dearest."

Lord looked his friend over and soon resumed in the same minor key:

"Listen and take the trouble to remember, please."

"If there's money in it, behold, I'm as serious as a financier."

"Plenty of money, if the charm is rightly worked. You find yourself, say, in a vein of bad luck—"

"Yes, I commonly do."

"Then you throw away a piece of money—"

"But should there be none at hand?"

"You throw away a piece of money," Lord repeated. "You lose it, for that's the proper wrinkle. Understand, the point is to drop it—to lose it. Then don't look over your shoulder and don't think any more about it."

"Seriously, you've tried this—this charm?"

"Often, and people say I'm successful—"

"Elaine says: 'Tom throws every six in the dice box.'"

"Elaine has a charm of her own," said Lord.

"Fact," said Movey.

"But mine differs from hers in that it works," continued Lord. "If it doesn't at first, you've blundered somehow. Go by rule and try again. It's a very simple, innocent, childish and beautiful little game, and one that usually acts like a marvel. Don't publish what you do, mind—do it and do it quietly. The man who picks up the piece of money will felicitate himself and go a bit further to the dogs. A beggar's bound to have a rough time, and a bite or two more or less won't increase the number of old sores."

"Eh?" exclaimed Movey. "But the morality—"

"Figs! We don't make the cosmic laws. Besides, as to the morality of it, I can't think it's worse than going home

with bad luck and bedeviling a wife or a widowed sister or your uncle. Keep your mouth closed and let somebody else do the wrangling and cursing. The person is probably built on a coarser plan—is less a bundle of jumping nerves, less sensitive. Unlike the proverbial ill wind, the thing does blow somebody good, and the somebody is that very interesting character—yourself."

Here Lord paused and sat quite still and watched the effect of his words. The artist, however, had already dropped his head and run his hands into his coat pockets, as he always did if anything went deep. Indeed, he had put on his thinking cap; he was mentally going over the details of the rather memorable conversation.

After an interval of silence Lord moved and stretched out his arm.

"Dick," said he, "will you have another glass?"

"Ah—thanks. Just half a glass—thanks," said the artist, shaking himself.

Then the broker, knowing that the charm idea had taken root, began talking on an entirely different subject.

III

THEY parted at Rueger's. Movey cut obliquely across the street, passed Franklin—passed up the west side of Ninth Street. As he took his long strides slowly, he was doing what he called a fool's trick, and doing it with more seriousness than we bestow on trifles—namely, crumbling a banknote between his fingers and then between his cuff and sleeve. To think of something else and not to look back were essential parts of the performance. It was easy to think of Elaine after having looked into his friend's eyes for an hour. It was easy, also, not to look back—he seldom did. But if he had, on nearing St. Paul's he would have seen at the corner below a very beautiful young woman very modishly attired.

For an instant, she paused there. She had come down Franklin Street; she turned up Ninth. The spruce fos-

sil, Derby, who saluted and joined her was a social figure, a jester fellow and altogether a bore. The charming blonde glanced at him sidewise with long, cool, bewitching gray eyes and smiled. There was the slightest apparent flush, which Derby fanned a bit by saying:

"He's in luck—just missed you."

She asked prettily: "And who, pray?"

Derby tilted the ferrule of his cane. "The man with his hands in his coat pockets."

"Oh—Mr. Dick Movey," she murmured in an even, delicious tone. "They say when he gets his hands in this position there's mischief to pay."

"Or is he counting his beads on the sly?"

"He's pondering—plotting."

"Plotting to capture the one woman?"

"Why, no"; said she; "that crisis is over—the capture's complete."

"Ah, dear me! And when do the bells ring?"

"Whenever he's ready," she answered, with white fine teeth on the edge of a smile.

Derby laughed heartily. The marriage of this and that type—it was about as probable, he fancied, as a panic in Wall Street on Sunday.

In the meantime the artist, pursuing the phantom and pursued for half a block by the fascinating reality, quit Ninth Street for Grace.

At his studio Movey lolled in his big easy chair, mused over the end of his cigar and dropped into a delightful but singularly brief after-dinner doze.

While the wool was thus drawn over his vision, he thought someone spoke his name—very sweetly, very pathetically. He woke, and there was the State Senator's daughter looking at him appealingly—from the canvas. For an instant he regarded her with the kind of emotion that ends in a chuckle.

Then he sat up and grew critical. The eyes in the picture were all wrong, he said, and the fingers were dead white poverty. He could not omit—how could he soften and yet suggest

with truth the down on the upper lip? In perplexity he pulled at his own mustache and afterward tried his hand on hers. Unquestionably the change was an improvement. He slipped off his coat and vigorously attacked kindred imperfections.

The lady received a great deal of attention in the next two or three hours, and in consequence of this and previous attentions, she offered to view a little less anatomy than she possessed in life and very decidedly more romantic alertness in the blue deeps of her rather sheepish orbs. So far, indeed, he had certainly etherialized the common rosy dough of the original and accentuated the least inelegant points of the impossible, fashion plate gown.

He reviewed what he had accomplished and he was pleased. He gave thanks and stopped. He would do the rest some time soon—even if it required the sacrifice of an entire day.

Later, on going out for a stretch and a stroll, chance presented him a seeming proof of Tom Lord's intimation that a chap at the small end of a charm might as well be at the rope's end. From the steps he saw people gathered around an ambulance at the door of the house across the way and recognized, as they lifted a stout person from the vehicle, the hanging head and apoplectic face of Colonel Byrd.

Dick Movey shivered and moved off. He must have gone through some process of reasoning, for he did as he went down Grace Street precisely what he had done a few hours before on coming up Ninth—except that he tucked the second banknote in the other sleeve.

It was curious. Curious, also, it was that, standing on the same step of the porch after his return, he should have confessed that as yet nothing very wonderful had happened.

He looked about. The twilight was deepening; the street was dull. The house across the way stood sidewise on the corner—on the opposite, Southwest corner, and the artist's eyes went up to the line above its dark-stained parapet wall. The sky was pale green silk and two jewels hung there—Venus and the

young moon, the star glittering just off from the horns of the slim, brilliant crescent. The luminous picture made dimmer and gloomier the house below—the house in which the Colonel lay.

When he struck a light in his chamber, Movey found on the table three little packets—two letters and a telegram that had arrived in his absence. He brushed by the letters. He seized and tore open the telegram.

"By jove! From Schnitz!"

The yellow leaf was all headline—nothing if not sensational. It crackled and spluttered under his nose. It caused his hand to tremble—his head to buzz, but it produced the most unspeakable glow.

Suddenly he passed to the window, raised the sash, took from his pocket the last ten-dollor note and—paused.

"No, no," said he; "just the fare to New York."

He jerked out his watch, stared at its face, screwed the key and muttered:

"Yes, time to catch the eight-twenty."

IV

ONE week thereafter the artist, with eyes twinkling and cheeks flushed and trousers burred here and about with dog hair, swung from a Main Street trolley car and went rapidly by bold, long strides into the office of Lord & Co. He pushed open a door marked "Private" and thrust in the larger part of himself—his head, his shoulders, his body and one leg. The modest left leg lagged crooked over the sill—for an instant.

Inside here it was silent except for the ticker, and rather alluring, rather luxurious. The 'phone wore an exclusive air; the ticker had a sweet, very small voice. There were mahogany fixtures, chairs done in embossed leather, twin ivory-framed sketches by R. Movey on the dark blue walls, red Jacqueminot buds in a vase by the tall, ground glass window.

The broker at his desk smiled as he turned and lifted his cool, gray eyes.

"Tom, may I see you a moment?"

"Howdy—come in. Where did you drop from?"

"All alone? How are you?"

"Tiptop. And you—ah, why, you're in fine feather!"

"That's the word," said the artist, sitting down.

"The charm must have worked," said Lord.

"Yes—oh, yes, I worked it my way."

"If you improved on the patent, I won't complain."

"I wrote Elaine and begged her not to tell, knowing she would—"

"She didn't."

"Ah! I wonder if she took me seriously?"

"Yes, seriously—as you take my jokes."

"I wrote you, also—"

"You mean you addressed an envelope and endorsed two cheques."

"One of my jokes," said Movey—"to the tune of forty-five hundred—"

"Beg pardon—four thousand and fifty."

"I forgot—less the commission. Pretty good?"

"Might have been worse."

"I considered it extraordinary—wonderful!"

"But what," asked the broker, "what the deuce led up to these wonders?"

"Schnitz, you see, telegraphed me the very day we lunched together, and I replied—in person. My dear fellow, you should have seen the little round man when I entered his place! His legs scarcely sustained him; he came tumbling into my arms and jostled off his glasses. His protruding, unearthly eyes are the size and color of oysters, and the monstrous lenses he wears—I found them caught on a button of my vest—clear and contract the eyes and make them normal and human, keen and shrewd. But without the glasses what a goblin picture he is! By the bye, while stopping with him I painted his portrait—with his glasses and velvet cap on—"

"You—"

"I assure you, Tom, the best of the lot. He hasn't a string of fur on head or face, and the cap was a godsend."

"And you painted him?"

"I couldn't do less—because of the big idea he conceived and by which I profited. My price per canvas, you know, was five hundred, and what did he do? Why, he packed away all but one—a study called 'The Pool,' labeled that 'Three thousand' and hung it in his Spring Exhibit among some admirable French things."

"Not a very bad idea, though by no means new," observed Lord, leaving unmentioned that the scheme spoken of was Elaine's and that he himself had fathered it on Schnitz.

"Along came a dry, somber girl of sixty," continued Movey, "and higgled till Schnitz fell five hundred notches. The next day she higgled till she got the prize at two thousand. She gave her name, and Schnitz chased himself—she was White's wife! When I reached there, her cousin was negotiating for another—it took him almost a week to achieve his nefarious ends. Yesterday morning Schnitz said 'Sold—two-five-double-O.' 'Hold there!' I cried. 'I don't want everything—all at once. Draw on my landscapes, my dear Schnitz, discreetly now, and don't sell another for less than three and three ciphers.'"

"You didn't!" said Lord. "What a sensible boy!"

"I got here today," said Movey, "today at noon; took a bath, changed my linen and struck a bee line for your house. But in the drawing-room there was Marcelle instead of Elaine—"

"Marcelle?"

"Blinds half down—same size as Elaine. I told her I adored her and kissed—"

"My wife?"

All in a glow, Movey nodded, saying: "Then Elaine over at the door clapped her hands. I dropped your wife and rushed—"

"Dropped! And what did my wife do?"

"Ran after me."

"And you?"

"After Elaine—seven-league boot style."

"And she?"

"Ahead, piping in a wee-wee voice: 'The fellow's crazy! Phone for Tom Lord!' 'To the devil with Tom Lord!' I shouted in hot pursuit."

"It wasn't decent, you know," said Lord.

"No, not at all, but so perfectly beautiful. We whirled through the hall, down the back steps and down—down where your dogs were, and a jolly time we had. I seized Elaine and made love—there in the open. Your wife cried: 'Shame! Barbarians! Vagabonds!' and the hounds leaped about us and howled. My—'twas Homeric—tremendous! But, dear Tom, Elaine declares she won't marry me unless—unless you consent."

The more amused Lord was, the more tranquil he always grew, and he sat very still now.

"Dick, are you ready?" he asked after a little pause.

"Ready! Zounds! Be serious."

"I agree," said Lord; "do you?"

"Of course, I agree."

"And, of course, you know," said the broker quietly, "that Elaine and

Marcelle are the 'Co.' in Lord & Co.?"

"What! Great stars! But I say, Tom, does it make any—difference?"

"Does it make any difference with you?"

"Why? How? Not a bit!"

The two looked at one another, smiling.

"So really," said Lord softly, "the charm did work?"

Movey laughed outright. "Tom, I can't tell whether I'm the proper sort or not," he said, "but I can't lose money—I never could. The fact is, I put a ten-dollar bill up each of my sleeves that day. I thought I lost them—I surely did my best. When I got back this morning and changed my coat, there were the notes. You know, old boy, I do my thinking with my hands in my pockets."

"Quite a charm in itself," said Lord.

"Now you and I both have one."

"And—Elaine, too," said Movey.

"Yes—she has a charm of her own," said Lord.

"The true—the incomparable charm," said Movey.



CLOSE confinement is telling on some persons, particularly those who have to confine themselves to the truth.



THE best way to acquire popularity is to entertain friends' flattering opinions of themselves.



LOVE laughs at Reason, but he treats Pride as a formidable opponent.



MANY are called, and few are found not bluffing.

THE LADY AND THE SAINT

By CLAIRE SCOTT

THE tables in the Cafe Biffi were filling rapidly. From the gallery overhead came the strains of a selection from Puccini's latest opera. The Englishman could not help wishing that the musicians would play a little less loudly; he knew Italian, and was anxious to catch some of the conversation going on around him. What were those two fellows over there talking about that required such an amazing amount of gesture? He was still gazing at them with lazy interest as they dexterously manipulated their spaghetti on the end of their forks, when they were joined by a tall, striking-looking man, wearing an exceedingly shabby coat. From the obsequious attitude of the waiter, who hastened forward to relieve this latest arrival of hat and cane, Carew judged him to be a celebrity in the world of either art or letters. This suspicion was confirmed by a glimpse he caught of a superb emerald ring flashing on the stranger's clawlike finger, and by a no less magnificent diamond pin which gleamed from the red surface of his greasy tie.

Anthony Carew felt in the mood for adventure. He had just recovered from a severe attack of typhoid fever, which had held him prisoner in a sanitarium on the Italian Riviera. Now he was well again and on his way home to England, but had broken his journey at Milan in order to visit the points of interest there. His regiment was due to sail from Southampton for India at the end of the month. It was but a limited time therefore that he had at his disposal. He had arrived in Milan late in the afternoon, and was desirous of losing no time.

As he sat watching the scene and sip-

ping his glass of sparkling *asti spumanti*, a picturesque figure appeared at one of the entrances to the restaurant. The newcomer was a tall, finely built young woman of about twenty-three years of age. For a moment she stood framed in the doorway scanning the scene before her, then moved slowly forward. She was dressed in a closely fitting gown of dull red velvet, which set off the lines of her almost perfect form to the best advantage. Her head was bare except for its own heavy coils of gleaming black hair, and long gold rings of peculiar workmanship set with coral hung from her ears. Gracefully poised on one arm she carried a shallow basket filled with flowers.

None of the diners as much as glanced in her direction. Anthony Carew was the sole exception. To him she was an object of interest, not unmingled with curiosity. He had heard of the celebrated flower girls of Milan. Ostensibly their business in life was to sell artistically arranged nosegays. In reality they plied the profitable trade of go-betweens. If credence was to be lent to report, there was no limit to the intrigues which grew and flourished under their fostering care. Carew had been told marvelous tales of their skill in this direction, and a sudden desire assailed him to test it.

He glanced around him in search of inspiration. It was not far to seek. Sitting at a table, in a line slightly behind him, near one of the windows, were three people, a woman and two men. They had just come into the restaurant. The men were obviously Italians. The younger of the two, who appeared to be about thirty-five, was dark, with a

rather sinister cast of countenance, well dressed and distinctly handsome. His companion was considerably older. His hair was the peculiar shade of silvery gray to which very black hair turns in a southern climate, but his piercing eyes looked out fiercely from beneath bushy black brows, and his teeth gleamed white, like those of a wolf, from under a pointed black mustache. There was something repellent about both men; their appearance suggested that any attempt to meddle with either of them or their interests would prove dangerous. Between them, her profile toward Carew, sat the woman. She was young, not more than twenty-two at the most. As he looked at her Carew felt convinced that he was in the presence of a compatriot. Her hair was fair, her features pale and delicately chiseled, while a slight droop at the corners of her small red mouth lent a pathetic expression to her face. He noticed a wedding ring among the diamonds on her slender left hand. Attracted by the closeness of his scrutiny the lady turned, and for a moment Carew gazed into the saddest and most beautiful eyes that he had ever seen. Was it—could it be true that in the flashing glance he had detected a mute, passionate appeal for help?

A shadow fell across the white cloth. Glancing up quickly, he saw the flower girl standing in front of him. There was an expression in her eyes which there was no mistaking. In their brown depths he read, as plainly as on a printed page:

"You can trust me. I am silent but swift and sure. The grave itself is not more secret. Employ me and I will work wonders for you."

For a moment he hesitated. A British officer, on the way home to rejoin his regiment, it would be rank folly to get himself mixed up in some intrigue in a foreign city. Then the flashing glance from the wonderful gray eyes came back to him, and he yielded.

Selecting a red rose with what he flattered himself was a careless and rather bored gesture, he remarked in an undertone:

"That lady over there, in the light blue dress, has a message for me."

He replaced the rose. The flower girl lingered. In turn she offered him a spray of lilies of the valley, and some Parma violets, finally moving away as though reluctant to leave a possible customer. Just then the waiter appeared, and Carew turned his attention to his meal. Had anyone been interested in observing him he would have conveyed the impression of being completely absorbed in his dinner.

It was fully ten minutes before the flower girl approached the table in the window occupied by the three actors in Carew's drama. Covertly, but with breathless interest, he watched the proceedings. Was the play to prove a tragedy, a comedy—or a fiasco?

The girl offered her wares to the woman, who merely replied with a negative movement of the head; then she turned to the two gentlemen. The elder chose an exquisite spray of lilies. The flower girl took it from his hand, selected a pin from the small cushion she carried, then stooped forward and pinned the lilies into the front of the lady's dress. It was all over in a moment.

Feverishly impatient, Carew waited for the girl to return to him. This she seemed in no hurry to do. He had finished his dinner, and was proceeding to light a fourth cigarette and order a second cup of black coffee when she passed. As her velvet gown brushed against his chair he caught the whisper:

"Tomorrow morning at eight in the cathedral, by the tomb of San Carlo."

She moved on, leaving him incredulous. What time had she had for this interchange of messages? Even if she had succeeded in her mission, who was this fair-haired woman who consented to make an appointment with an absolute stranger in a Milanese restaurant?

He was conscious of a sudden chill. His desire for adventure was quenched. This countrywoman of his had fallen immeasurably in his esteem.

He called the waiter, paid the bill and turned to leave. At the door he saw the flower girl. She was waiting for him.

"Una rosa, signore! Una bella rosa, il fiore degli amanti."

He took the flower with a feeling of re-

pugnance, dropped a gold coin into her basket and stepped out into the starlit Italian night.

Should he keep the appointment? That was the question which exercised him all the way back to his hotel. He fell asleep without having decided upon an answer.

Early the next morning one of the many church clocks chiming six waked him with a start. The instinct which caused him to jump out of bed was that of a man who has an urgent appointment to keep. Dressing rapidly, he went downstairs, to find the restaurant already full. His coffee and rolls dispatched, he started to walk to the cathedral. It was a glorious April morning. The birds were singing in the park. The sky was blue and cloudless, and the atmosphere was charged with the vaguely thrilling possibilities and wordless promise of spring.

He turned down a narrow, dark side street, to emerge, five minutes later, in the broad Cathedral Square. A vender of picture postcards thrust his wares insinuatingly in front of him, but Carew was in no mood to buy. The great white marble cathedral rose before him in all its purity and splendor. The sun lighted up the white façade until it shone with the dazzling brilliancy of newly fallen snow, while rays of golden light shot down from where the gilt figure of the Madonna glittered at the summit. He conquered the impulse to shade his eyes with his hand, and stepping into the cool gloom of the interior, lost no time in making his way downstairs, to where the remains of San Carlo di Borromeo reposed in the crypt. Until his eyes grew accustomed to the dim religious light he believed himself to be alone with the saint. Drawing near to the sarcophagus he perceived with a thrill the kneeling figure of a woman. She was dressed in gray, a long veil and blue spectacles effectually concealing her identity.

His heart began to beat more quickly. Was this an ordinary tourist, a pilgrim to the shrine of the saint, or the lady of the previous evening? He was about to approach her, when he discerned what

appeared to be a Capuchin monk standing motionless in the shadow.

Resisting a first angry impulse to turn and walk away, Carew stepped forward softly and knelt down beside the woman, apparently intent upon her rosary. Slowly the golden beads revolved in her hands. Suddenly he became aware that she was speaking, and in English, but in so low a tone that he had to strain his ears to catch the meaning.

"I am in danger," she said. "Will you help me?"

"If I can," he replied. "Tell me how."

"I dare not. I suspect that monk of being a spy. Return here tomorrow at the same hour."

She rose, crossed herself and moved away. The monk glided after her, a shadow among shadows. Carew remained alone with the saint.

He no longer doubted that he was in the presence of real facts. This was no adventuress, no mere vulgar intrigue. His eye was caught by something white on the floor beside him. He stooped and picked it up. It was a flimsy square of fine cambric, a woman's handkerchief. In one corner was a monogram. With difficulty he made out the diminutive letters, M. C., surmounted by the nine-pointed coronet of a countess.

That evening he returned to the Cafe Biffi for dinner. It was past nine o'clock when the flower girl made her appearance. She seemed bent upon tantalizing him, for it was fully an hour before she approached his table. Again he went through the same pretense of careless indifference.

"Who is she?" he asked, picking up a spray of lilies.

"The Contessa Maria di Casabianca," the girl replied.

"She is English?" he said, a note of interrogation in his voice.

"No, *signore*—only half English. Her father was Russian. The Conte di Casabianca is Italian. He married her because she is very rich and beautiful, but they say she is mad."

Carew started.

"Mad!" he exclaimed. "It cannot be true! You do not believe it to be true?"

"No," she answered with a flash of

white teeth. "She is rich and she is beautiful. Her husband is very jealous. Perhaps she is mad, perhaps not," and she walked on to the next table with a careless gesture of indifference.

The heated atmosphere of the restaurant had grown suddenly stifling. Carew felt that he must get out into the open air or he would choke.

Mad? Never! He burned with indignation at the mere thought.

Next day he was the first at the tomb of the saint. Eight o'clock had struck when the gray-robed lady made her appearance. He stepped forward to meet her.

"I want to help you," he said, wasting no time in preliminaries; "and I must leave Milan tomorrow."

She started, but the thick gray veil and blue glasses betrayed no secrets. He could detect nothing of her expression. For an instant she hesitated, as though making up her mind upon some important point.

"I will trust you," she said. "I must. I am partly a countrywoman of yours. That gives me a claim. My husband is an Italian. He desired to obtain control of my fortune, and as I will not give it up to him of my own free will he has spread the report that I am mad. His next step will be to force me into a lunatic asylum."

Even through her disguise he could detect that she was laboring under strong emotion.

"How can I help you?" he asked.

"I desire to escape, and I am penniless," she said. "Above all I want to avoid any scandal. Exposure would be fatal. Help me across the frontier and lend me five hundred lire."

Carew thought for a moment. "Tonight, at ten o'clock," he said, "I will have a motor waiting outside the main entrance to the cathedral."

The appointed hour found him waiting, with an eighty-horsepower car. He was not kept long in suspense. Upon the last stroke of ten the familiar gray figure emerged from the shadow of the sacred edifice. He helped the lady into her place and lost no time in getting away. She sat very still and seemed in no mood for conversation, and he respected her silence.

He wondered whether, when they were out in the open country, she would raise her veil. He longed for another look into those wonderful eyes. The rising sun was painting the east in a glory of crimson and gold when he turned to his companion.

"We are at the frontier," he said. "This is Switzerland. Where do you wish to go? The customs officials will not allow us to pass, as motors are forbidden in the Alps."

"Please set me down here," she replied in a strange, husky voice. "I will go on by rail. That must be the station."

He was conscious of a keen feeling of disappointment, almost of resentment, but he did as she requested. At the moment of parting, as he put her on a train bound north, she handed him a small packet.

"Do not open this until you land in England," she whispered in the same thick tone.

That was all. No word of thanks or good-bye.

Back in Milan, curiosity impelled him to open the packet. He unfolded a printed document and read:

One thousand lire reward offered for information leading to the arrest of Michael Petrikoff, a Nihilist wanted by the Russian police. Petrikoff is supposed to be in hiding in Italy. In appearance he is short and slight, with black hair and eyes, and a deep cut across the left side of his face, which is clean shaven. He speaks Italian fluently, likewise French, German and English. He is twenty-four years of age.



ACTORS imitate mankind; amateurs imitate actors.

THE EMPTY LAMP

By FORREST HALSEY

CHARACTERS

THE MAN.
THE WOMAN.
THE BOY.

SCENE—A large old-fashioned room in a comfortable boarding house. A large mantel-piece of white marble is at the back; its shelf holds numerous books and pamphlets within easy reach of a leather lounge chair. There is a table with more books, and an oil lamp with a green shade. The yellow, mellow light from the lamp mingles pleasantly with that from a coal fire on the hearth. In curious contrast to the sedate books and prints are several college flags, photographs of groups of lads in rowing and football costumes. A pair of boxing gloves with a date painted in white on them hang above the fireplace. The MAN sits by the fire reading and smoking. He is white-haired and rather frail. He looks the ordinary type of middle-aged bank clerk. As he reads from his worn and heavy volume of Scott his face is suddenly lit with gentle amusement. The lamp gives a wavering flicker. He looks at it, frowns, turns up the wick, then holds the lamp to his ear, shakes it, then sighs and sets it down.

MAN

Why does she always forget to fill it?

(He looks at the lamp, then goes to the gas jet, strikes a match, hesitates, then throws the match away.)

I will not read Scott by gaslight.

(A knock at the door.)

Well?

VOICE

Excuse me, Mr. Roberts.

MAN

Come in, Mrs. Peen.

VOICE

Oh, I couldn't think of it, Mr. Roberts. I'm not dressed.

MAN *(sighing wearily)*

Well, I suppose you want me to come and see you.

(He opens the door to the hallway.)

VOICE *(with kittenish coquetry)*

I do declare, Mr. Roberts, it does seem as if I never see you but when I am looking a sight. Jinny's gone out, and I was in the bathtub when the bell rang. I do declare, I never am dressed when you see me.

MAN

Oh, not as bad as that, Mrs. Peen.

VOICE

It is, Mr. Roberts. I was just saying to your son: "I never see your father in

THE EMPTY LAMP

the daytime, and at night, with the work and one thing or another, I never have a chance to put a thing on. What must he think of me?" And I intended to fill your lamp, but I simply had to get into the tub now, because if I wait all the young gentlemen will be home, and that Miss Kingtinger, first floor front, she's moving around peeking her head out the door. And if she gets in the tub, she stays for hours. And I thought I'd just slip in, and then the bell rang. And you don't mind my holding my wrapper together, because I couldn't find the belt—it must 'a' went under the tub, and the doctor warned me particular not to stoop or I'd be likely to have a flush of blood to the head. The Lord knows I have nothin' but trouble, Mr. Roberts. That young Mr. Clend owes me for two weeks, and I don't know what to do about it; and I'm afraid that foreigner in the third floor back is a musician. He brought in a long black box; if it's a violin I'm a ruined woman. I'm so worried that nothing sets on my stummick, and now you have to see me this way! And I surely meant to fill your lamp, knowin' how you hate gas.

MAN

Yes, I do dislike gas, Mrs. Peen. Does someone want to see me?

VOICE

Yes—a lady.

MAN

A lady?

VOICE

Yes. Oh, you needn't be afraid of her. I know how you hate women, Mr. Roberts. *(She sighs.)* I said to Jinny, I said: "Some woman is responsible for it, I know." But all women shouldn't be held to blame for the faults of one, Mr. Roberts. Oh, my hair is just a sight!

MAN

Did the lady say what she wanted?

VOICE

No, but you needn't be afraid, Mr. Roberts; she is a most refined person, and she has a car with a footman on the sidewalk.

MAN

Did she give you a card?

VOICE

There, I declare I forgot it! Excuse me, Mr. Roberts, but I have so much trouble, and my stummick's gone back on me; and if it does turn out he's a violinist it'll be the last straw.

MAN

Give me the card, please.

VOICE

I declare, it's all wet from my hands. I'm so nervous at bein' seen by you lookin' like this! What must you think of women, anyway, Mr. Roberts?

(A fat red arm holding a card is thrust into the room. The MAN reads the card.)

I said to that lovely boy, your son, I said: "Your father is the loveliest gentleman that ever come into my house, but I never see a man that hated women like he does." That was when you put that picture of the Christy Harrison girl—that pretty thing with the lovely back hair and violets that I hung on your wall—put it out in the hall; but I never think there was a man could make refined heads like Gibson done.

MAN *(in a tone of authority)*

Show the lady up here at once.

VOICE

Yes, Mr. Roberts—but all women is not to be took at the same values.

(The MAN shuts the door. Going to the photographs, he gathers them up and lays them face down on the table. There is a knock on the door. The MAN sets his lips, goes to the door and opens it. The WOMAN enters. She looks very young. The MAN closes the door. For a moment they stand looking at each other.)

WOMAN

I—I saw the light in the window. I stopped a moment on my way to the Opera.

MAN *(coldly)*

And you find a Mr. Roberts, whom you did not expect to see?

WOMAN *(equally coldly)*

On the contrary, I am glad to be able to talk to you again. I think that it is

time we understood each other. You still have the old lamp, I see.

MAN

Yes, it is the only thing I kept. Shall I light the gas?

WOMAN

No—I have at last arrived at the time when I need lamplight, too, Arthur.

MAN

Indeed, you were always fond of bright light.

WOMAN

I am still, but my complexion is not.

MAN

I am afraid the lamp is almost empty. I was just wondering if it would last another ten minutes.

WOMAN (*watching him as his fingers pick at his coat. Her lips quiver with the beginning of a laugh, which is suppressed and turned into a sigh.*)

Let us have ten minutes of lamplight—it is not much, Arthur, after all these years.

MAN

No, it is not much.

WOMAN (*a little wistfully*)

How it brings things back, the light I mean! (*Looking at him with curious directness.*) You are very decent not to turn me away.

MAN

Why did you come?

WOMAN

You must blame the lamplight on the window blind for that. I saw it from my car—I have been dining in Washington Square. I thought—well, Arthur, I don't know exactly what I did think—in fact, I only began to think when you opened the door.

MAN

I repeat—what do you want?

WOMAN

Just to sit there, as I used to do, by the lamp. I don't know what is the matter with me tonight—perhaps I am not well—I often get tired now. Surely you will let me sit down here for just a little while.

MAN

Why did you come?

WOMAN

Just on an impulse. That's all, Arthur. Just let me sit by the lamp and talk to you. Surely all bitterness has died out between us, years ago.

MAN

Yes—years ago. Sit down, Mrs. Agnew.

(*She opens her lips as if to speak, hesitates, then sits down, looking at him intently.*)

WOMAN

Won't you sit down there? (*She indicates the chair on the other side of the table.*) Please. (*He sits, hesitatingly, looking at her half in fear.*) You don't believe me?

MAN

No—I only do not understand you.

WOMAN

Well, I don't quite understand myself sometimes. I don't think you ever did, Arthur.

MAN

You are mistaken. I understood you very clearly once.

WOMAN (*with a slight smile*)

I wonder? Well, no matter; that is all over long ago.

MAN

Yes, long ago. How did you know we—I was here?

WOMAN

I met your sister some weeks ago in a shop. She told me.

MAN

Ella—she told you?

WOMAN

Don't blame her. I made her tell me.

MAN

Why?

WOMAN (*with a shrug*)

Why? For the same reason that I stopped my car tonight—an impulse.

MAN

But why have impulses now?

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WOMAN

Arthur—please be decent about this—please. You were always considerate of me, Arthur.

MAN

Yes, I was considerate—if you want to call it that. Elinor, why are you here?

WOMAN

You don't believe me when I tell you. You called me Elinor just now. Do you know, I have often seemed to hear you say it, just like that—"Elinor."

MAN

Why are you here?

WOMAN

You have grown so hard.

MAN

No, only wise. Why did you come? *(He bends forward, a certain intense fierceness in his face.)*

I'll tell you why you came. You did not expect to find me here at all. You hoped to see—

WOMAN

And if I did? He is my—

MAN

You have nothing to do with him. You sold him to me. The bargain is closed.

WOMAN

Arthur!

MAN

Shall I tell you why you came—what impulse it was that brought you? Do you think you can fool me? You did it once—in fact, looking back I can see how easily you always did fool me. You are very clever, Elinor, but you have given me a long time in which to see how clever you were.

WOMAN

I can't understand you.

MAN *(harshly)*

Yes, you do.

(They look at each other in the lamp-light.)

WOMAN

I want him—I need him. You sha'n't stand between us. *(With a slow*

smile, her eyelids lowered.) You never were able to stop me when I wanted a thing, and you shall not stop me now.

MAN

Yes, I can.

WOMAN

How?

MAN *(steadily and cruelly)*

By telling him his mother is alive.

WOMAN *(rising)*

He does not know. You never told him—

MAN

I told him his mother was—well, all a boy should admire in a dead mother. It is very necessary, Elinor, that a boy should have a mother—the right kind of a mother. *(He laughs wearily.)* I think that I have created the right kind of a mother for him to remember. He is the better for it, and surely you are none the worse.

WOMAN

He does not even know I am his mother?

MAN

He does not know you are alive.

(She walks to the fireplace. Her hands stray over the table as if she were feeling for support; they touch the photographs he has turned face downward. She absently looks at one. Suddenly she bends and holds the photograph under the lamp.)

WOMAN

He is in this group. Which one is he—which—which?

MAN

Doubtless your mother heart will tell you.

WOMAN *(triumphantly)*

There! *(She points.)*

MAN *(amused)*

We used to play a game of guessing when we were children. Shall I say you are warm, but not exactly warm enough? That is not my son.

WOMAN

Which—which?

MAN

He is not in the picture.

WOMAN (*looking at him*)

You liar! You want him all to yourself! Tell me which one he is—how can I know him? I haven't seen him since he was a baby. How can I know him?

MAN (*quietly*)

Yes, how can you? And you are right—I won't share him with you, Mrs. Agnew.

WOMAN (*with a cry of joy*)

That is he! I know him—I know him! Why, the hair, the head, the tall figure, all is like me!

(*He snatches the photograph from her, tears it to pieces and throws the fragments on the floor. With a cry she falls on her knees and gathers the pieces together.*)

WOMAN

And he thought I was dead—you told him I was dead! How dared you?

(*She rises and confronts him, holding the scraps of torn cardboard to her breast.*)

MAN

I did it to get rid of you.

WOMAN

Oh—Oh! (*She controls herself.*) That was very clever of you, and very successful, Arthur. (*She laughs quietly.*) Very successful.

MAN

Was it? I am glad to hear it. (*There is a pause.*) When are you going?

WOMAN

You told him that I was dead.

MAN

I told him his mother was a good woman, and that she was dead. I have made him reverence the memory of his mother. I have, through the influence of my own mother, been able to keep myself from being wholly cynical about women. I did what I did, not from sentiment, but for the boy's good. It is a very dangerous thing to destroy a boy's belief in women. (*He laughs.*) Therefore I gave him a fictitious mother, endowed her with all the virtues, and killed her. When one endows a woman with all the virtues, the sooner one kills her the better.

(*She looks at him, holding the torn scraps of pasteboard to her breast.*)

Do you know, Mrs. Agnew, I have a great love for the wife I have created from my dreaming. My son and I often talk of her. Shall I tell you what she was like, this mother of my son?

(*She does not speak.*)

I told him that the woman I married was a very young girl, and that we went to live in a tiny house, just outside of the city, so that she could take care of it all by herself. She was going to be a real help to her husband—those were her words. My son has often contrasted his mother's attitude with that of modern women, who marry two servants and an apartment, and add a husband so that there may be no trouble about the bills at the end of the month.

I told him about our evenings at the table, with the lamp between us, and how she and I would plan our lives, and his life, when we knew that he was coming. It seemed, long before our son ever came, that he was with us in that room—that tiny, lamplit room, and that we had made a little safe nest where we could guard him until we grew old, until he could guard us. The memory of those nights around the lamp is very dear to me—even yet.

WOMAN

Arthur!

MAN

I told him how I would drag myself back to the little house after a day of trouble and defeat in the city, and how the walls of the room seemed to close around me like the walls of a harbor. And how, sitting there by the lamp, his mother would listen to the story of the day and smile at me in the lamplight until I seemed to see the light, not of the lamp but of the sunrise of another day—our day, the day she was so sure would come.

(*She looks from him to the lamp, lays the pieces of cardboard on the table and fits them together.*)

I told him that all through my poverty and struggle she stood by me, that she was in very truth a wife, a helpmate.

THE EMPTY LAMP

WOMAN

And then what else have you told him?

MAN

I told him that the day came, my day. My invention was a success, and money came to us. We were very glad of that for his sake—he had come, too, by that time. He had brought us luck. She called him our golden boy. We had everything—money, the boy, each other.

WOMAN (*looking at him for the first time*)

Well? And then I suppose you told him that she died.

MAN

Yes, she died. (*He laughs.*) Rather luckily for her. You see, the patent failed, after all. She was spared the hard poverty that came to the two of us who were left. Yes, she was spared poverty.

(*The WOMAN does not speak, but looks at him intently.*)

Do you know, Elinor—Mrs. Agnew—I am rather sorry that I killed her just then. Sometimes I have felt that I should have let her live a year or two—such a noble example for the boy, a mother cheerfully resuming the struggle by her husband's side, encouraging him to battle again, extracting the sting from defeat, this bitterest of all defeats, because his life's work had turned out to be hopeless. Nature had stamped him as only one of the world's drudges, when he had thought that he was one to whom the big crown of success should belong.

(*He mechanically adjusts the shade of the lamp so that the light touches her set face.*)

No, Mrs. Agnew, my inventive faculty allowed me to miss a great opportunity when I killed that dream wife of mine so soon. I should have let her live through our struggles, mine and the boy's. Curiously enough, Mrs. Agnew, it seemed to me sometimes, as I sat in the little room hearing the baby's breathing, watching him sleeping in the lamplight, that she did live, that she was there with me, bearing poverty and suffering with the bravery that she had

always shown. Yes, she seemed to be there guarding him with me. Sometimes it did not seem to me possible that I was a failure and getting old, and that she had gone away—that she was dead.

(*There is a pause.*)

WOMAN

I—I would have helped you—had I known. How could I know? I have lived always abroad.

MAN (*as if he had not heard her*)

But in reality she was dead. Don't you think, for the boy's sake, it was better that way, Mrs. Agnew?

(*She does not answer.*)

And yet she missed much, that wife of my dreams. Of course, she would have had to live with me, the failure, but he, her son, would have been there, too. I wonder sometimes if after all the victory does not rest with me. For though I know poverty, want even, when it came to providing my son with the education that would give him the chance to be the success his father had failed of, we did it. Yes, Mrs. Agnew, I am not wholly a failure; I have succeeded in rearing a splendid son.

WOMAN (*hoarsely*)

I must see him—I must see him.

MAN

You have the wealth you sold him for.

WOMAN

But, Arthur, think what I could do for him. Is it right toward him? Would he want you to shut me out of his life? Think of him. Think what I can make him.

MAN

He is strong, clean and honest. He reverences women. He is earning his living. He loves a good girl of humble, simple people; some day he may marry her and rear strong children. What more does he need?

WOMAN

I can give him wealth, position.

MAN

You have wealth and position. Have they made you happy, Mrs. Agnew?

WOMAN

Oh, listen, Arthur. I will give him all my money, all of it. You have a right to be hard, but you can't understand how the thought of that failure of ours long ago cut. It was not the loss of the money that drove me to the step I took, but the thought of the failure—failure that would strip me of my new place in the world, that would give all my new friends the chance to sneer at me. I had not the heart to go back. I was ambitious and a fool. Yes, a thousand times a fool, when I sold my son. But I have repented—you, no one, can know how much. But all that is done now. Oh, Arthur, think of our son. I will give him all my money—all of it.

MAN (kindly)

I am thinking of him. I was thinking how I could tell him that his mother was not the woman of whom I have told him, but the woman who bears another man's name, the woman I took to the altar where she swore to be true to me, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, until death did us part. I can hear old Mr. Anderson's voice now as he said it—"until death do us part." Mrs. Agnew, in spite of all the law says, you are still my wife. I have never forfeited my right to be your husband. God does not recognize failure as a ground for divorce. *(He advances toward her. His voice is strong.)*

We are man and wife. How can I tell my son his mother is a woman living in adultery? *(He points to the door.)*

Go! Leave to my son his respect for his mother, and to me the memories of the girl I married. Go, Mrs. Agnew; you will be late for the Opera.

(She draws her ermines and silks about her and turns toward the door, hesitates, turns back, picks up the pieces of the photograph from the table and slowly walks to the door. He sighs, in relief, yet his eyes follow her with a sort of controlled sadness.)

WOMAN (whirling about)

No! I won't go! You sha'n't have him. I want him. All my life I have been strong enough to get what I wanted, cost what it might. And I will have him. I am

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stronger than you are—I always was. You can share him with me, or I'll take him and keep him all for myself.

(She comes fiercely across toward him. He shrinks from her.)

Look at the contrast between us, Arthur Roberts. I look younger than you do by twenty years. That is because I am a success—yes, a success. I can fight time as well as everything else.

You tell him what you please about me, but I'll see him. He shall see my side. He will be the first man I have ever failed to make love me. Do you think you can fight me? If so, try it, and I'll make him hate you. You never succeeded in anything you tried to do—I always have. I want my son—do you think you can fight me?

(The lamp flares up, showing clearly the crushed, broken man and the strong, radiant woman.)

MAN (in old, feeble tones)

The lamp is going out. You had better go—it will be dark directly—the lamp is going out.

WOMAN

Answer me.

MAN (wearily)

I never have succeeded in anything—I suppose I shall fail to hold the love of my son.

BOY'S VOICE (outside)

Open the door, dad. Mrs. Peen has turned off the hall gas again, confound it!

WOMAN (looking triumphantly at the MAN)

What do you say? Will you share him?

MAN

No. Not because I am thinking of myself, but to save him—to save him from you.

BOY'S VOICE

Open the door. The hall is black as a hat.

WOMAN

You were always a fool, Arthur. I will open the door

(She looks at him smiling. He sinks into a chair and buries his face in his

THE EMPTY LAMP

hands. She opens the door. As she does so the lamp goes out and the stage is in complete darkness.)

Boy

Where is the door, anyway? Dad!

MAN

Yes, son.

Boy (*who has evidently entered the room*)

What are you in the dark for? Where are the matches? Bother—I can't find them! Oh, dad, I can't wait to tell you! It's all right—she is going to marry me! You won't be lonely any more, good old dad, because she will be with you when I am out on the road for the firm. We are going to have a little house in the country, just like you and mother had. We'll take the old lamp. Can't you see

her sitting by it, just as mother did? Gee, I wish mother had lived to hear this. How glad she would be, wouldn't she, dad?

MAN

The matches are on the table. Light the gas.

(The boy is heard feeling about among the books; a match flames; the stage is flooded with light. The WOMAN has gone.)

Boy

Why, dad, you haven't done that for years!

MAN

What?

Boy

Kissed me, as you did just now.

CURTAIN



INTO THE DARK

By THYRA SAMTER

THE dark, I used to hate it so,
In dear, dead days I'd always go
Where there was mirth and laughter free,
And music, lights and gaiety,
In days when you were here to know.

I loved to hear the soft frou-frou
Of silken garments, loved to see
Just happiness. Now, there's for me
The dark.

Alone into the dark I go,
Stretch out my arms to you, as though
You were quite near. My gray thoughts flee;
My lips seek yours in memory.
Now you're not here, it helps me so—
The dark.

THE TRANSFIGURATION ON LUNY MOUNT

By MINNIE BARBOUR ADAMS

"**L**OIS!" called the exasperated voice of my landlady, Mrs. Dearborn. "Lois, I've told ye a dozen times that if ye didn't keep your pesky scribblin's picked up, I'd burn 'em; and here goes."

I heard the rustle of paper and the familiar, rasping sough as the lid of the ash can was raised. Both ceased abruptly, however, at a shrill, unearthly scream. There was silence for a moment; then it came again, uncanny, inarticulate, more like the cry of a wild animal than that of a human being.

"Sh-h!" warned Mrs. Dearborn. "The doctor'll hear ye. Well, take the dratted things if you're goin' to make such a fuss about 'em." I detected a note of apprehension in her voice, and heard her muttering to herself as she passed the corner of the porch an instant later.

Now, who, I wondered sleepily, was Lois? I had been at the farm three days and had seen no females save Mrs. Dearborn and her gaunt maiden sister, who constantly reminded me of a gnarled, weatherbeaten old crab-apple tree. But never mind who or what Lois was, I thought, settling myself more comfortably in the hammock. They probably had left the closet door ajar and the family skeleton was temporarily at large, and I was concerned—at least, should be—only in hanging a dozen pounds of flesh on mine, and getting in a little repair work on the badly shattered system within; so, dismissing the subject, I fell asleep.

Evidently they corralled it, whatever it was, for I heard nothing of it for some time. Then, one morning before I was up, I heard the voice of the crab-apple tree in the hall outside my door.

"This makes seven of 'em I've picked up this mornin'." It creaked complainingly. "Das't I burn 'em up, Emily?"

"No-o," returned Mrs. Dearborn hesitatingly; "you hadn't better do that. I'm half afraid of her when she screeches so. Just put 'em in her basket behind the kitchen door."

Seven what? I wondered as I strolled out to my hammock under the trees. "Scribblin's," evidently, I decided, remembering the first conversation I had overheard. But, what the nation were "scribblin's?" As though in answer to my question, one of my own letter heads fluttered along the ground, and idly picking it up as I dropped into the hammock, I read with growing surprise:

The little wild thing, tired from its long day of foraging and eluding its enemies, crawled wearily into a crevice beneath a fallen tree. The ferns closed after it, whispering softly, "We will guard you. Sleep." The tall grasses rustled and bent their slender heads, saying, "We will hide you. Sleep." The trees—

Up to this time the writing had been beautiful and the construction faultless, but here the lines began to waver, and the thought was soon lost amidst the wildest jargon.

Greatly interested, I began a still hunt for "scribblin's," and soon had quite a collection. I found them every-

where, on scraps of wrapping paper, on torn sacks, these sparks struck from a mind diseased—for I was certain that no sane mind could have conceived them. There were exquisite bits of verse, breathing of the beauties of flower and tree; sonorous monographs filled with the grandeur of a storm or a sunset among the hills. They usually began clear and concise, soon wavered, then ran smoothly for a time, ending in the merest balderdash. Again I asked myself: "Who is Lois?" But this time I did not dismiss the question carelessly.

When I had come to the farm some time before, both mind and body tottering from the strain of an epidemic that had swept over our city, I had had but one thought—rest, everlasting rest most likely, for I felt quite sure that never again could I bring myself to walk an unnecessary step, or to raise my hand—unless it were to my mouth, and that only when it was freighted with grist for a mill of whose capacity I had never dreamed. So I lay all day in the hammock, so weak and inert that I had the feeling of sinking through the meshes like an infernal waffle, only crawling out five or six times a day to stagger into the dining room for the aforementioned grist; but that, fresh air and rest began to get in their work, and I made tentative little pilgrimages to the end of the porch and in time even journeyed as far as the pumphouse, which was fully a rod away. Then one day I actually reached the Mecca of my desires—the creek that ran a few miles back of the house. It really seemed miles to me, for in getting there I fell over two fences, crawled under a third and rolled down a rather stiffish bank, where I lay flat on my face and fished with a hook baited with bacon—till I ate the bacon. What mattered it that I didn't get a single bite, save one on my leg, inflicted by a bloodthirsty horsefly? What mattered it that I was ignominiously carted home in the wheelbarrow by the grinning hired men, who found me hanging over the second fence? I had been fishing, and that was something.

At length, having outgrown the creek and bacon bait, I slung a well filled knapsack over my shoulder and boldly started forth to the river for a day's fishing. By noon I had outgrown that also; consequently, after placing the contents of the knapsack where they would do the most good and sleeping for an hour, I started out to explore the country.

For some time I climbed a steep, rocky road, but left it at the lure of a crimson wing flashing among the trees above. I followed it blindly for a while, only to lose it and myself along with it. I had scarcely grasped this fact when another presented itself for my consideration; a storm was hurling itself toward the hills from the north-east, and a soaking from the black-browed, white-frilled monster, who would probably add to the indignity by pelting me with a volley of ice before he was through with me, was more than I cared to face.

The woods looked more dense a little further on, and I could dimly see a great rocky ledge cropping out from the steep hillside. If I could only reach it I might find shelter. And I did—headlong, just as the great drops began to patter about me.

A limestone shelf ten feet wide roofed a triangular space that was further inclosed by saplings whose tops had been secured in some manner to the ledge above. These were entirely covered by a wall of vines that, even as I plunged beneath their shelter, I realized by their great variety were not of haphazard growth. The next few minutes were occupied in getting my breath and watching the storm; then I looked about me.

It was a human habitation of some sort, for stakes had been driven across one side to hold the pile of fir boughs that, covered with a blanket and topped by a pillow, was evidently a bed. An old splint-bottomed chair and a few pine boxes were about, while, just outside the opening, was a primitive arrangement of stones surrounding a heap of ashes and blackened coals. But the rock walls of the place claimed

the most of my attention. They were nearly covered with pictures cut from magazines and papers, and both the subjects and the arrangement struck me as odd for such a place.

On a rather smooth place was a collection of Madonnas, held in place by pins stuck in the soft stone; another collection embraced a dozen samples of Dutch art, Israel's predominating; another a number from the Barbizon school, and so on. No confusion, no mixing of the different types. On a shelf made by placing a fence board on pegs were a number of books, whose titles caused me still further surprise. Masters of painting and music, a work on ceramics, two or three on psychology and science, histories galore and many others that one would scarcely expect to find outside of a schoolroom or library.

More puzzled than ever about the occupant, I turned from the shelf and saw a crumpled bit of paper lying near the chair. There was something very familiar about that soiled scrap, and I knew as I smoothed it out on my knee that the riddle of the versatile hermit was solved. It was Lois.

Beneath a sketchy picture of a hill that was gazing inquiringly up at a frowning mountain, I read:

Read the Hill to the Mountain: "What makes you so gray?"

Though I am sure it were foolish to ask.
With the sorrows of Earth 'neath your eyes
every day,

Happiness would be such a task
That" . . .

It ended in some unintelligible nonsense about the mountain standing ever with its feet in the river.

"Give me my hills," said a low voice from the doorway, and, looking, I saw the strangest creature I have ever beheld. I tossed her hills and mountains to her, and then, without a word, dropped on the most substantial box and looked her over.

Though she was dripping, soaking wet, she didn't seem aware of it; but, taking a book on botany from the shelf, turned with great assurance to a certain page and began eagerly comparing

an odd-shaped leaf to a pictured one in the book.

She was a little above medium height, erect and well formed, but thin to emaciation. Her face would have been pleasing—pretty, even—if it had had any expression, but her large blue eyes were lifeless and dull. Her hair was beautiful, a rich golden brown verging toward red, that framed her colorless face like an aureole of light. It lay about her fine head in soft, rippling waves, wreathed her brow and small ears with clinging curls and tendrils and then fell away in two thick braids that reached below her waist. I had never seen anything so glorious. So this was Lois, the bard of the sugar sack and soap wrappers! Shades of Ophelia! I had seen her at last, but I hadn't seen much.

How wet she was! The water dripped monotonously from the heavy braids and from the hem of the shapeless blue calico dress.

"Won't you catch cold?" I asked at length.

She looked at me dully.

"Why?" she asked, carefully smoothing out the leaf and placing it among a number of others in an old atlas to dry.

"From being so wet," I replied.

She laughed derisively.

"Look at Robin Hood," she said, pointing to a bedraggled robin who had paused in his search for worms to eye her hopefully. She opened a covered pail that I had noticed before and tossed him some crumbs, which he gobbled greedily.

"He's wet," she said shortly, and went back to her atlas.

"But, see here!" I persisted as she coughed and shivered slightly. "It's different with you. Come! Can't you get into some kind of a dry rig? And then, for heaven's sake, if there is anything eatable about here, let me have it!"

"Eat? Eat?" she repeated, looking at me dazedly. "Eat?" she said again, and going to a covered dish on the shelf, she gave me, with the air of a Lady Bountiful, an immense cucumber pickle.

"Good heavens, girl!" I cried disappointedly. "I ask for bread and you give me a dill pickle! Look around a bit and see if you can't find something? I'm faint with hunger."

"Hunger? Oh, yes," she said brightly, as though she knew all about it at last. From the covered pail she gave me a huge loaf of bread, and then, hastening to a basket in the corner, she took from it a handful of uncooked, new potatoes about the size of hickory nuts, and a couple of eggs.

I laid the potatoes down without comment and cracked an egg against the stone wall, thinking, of course, that it was hard boiled. It wasn't! I caught a floating glimpse of a yellow disk, but it eluded my clutching fingers like quicksilver and disappeared among the pine needles that covered the floor.

Miss Luny looked up from her atlas, mildly disturbed at my remarks. They were rather fiery; and I smiled as I thought that if I had any way to confine them temporarily I might use them to cook the other egg.

"Oh, hang it all, Lois!" I cried in exasperation. "Isn't there anything else cached around here? Think, girl! I'm starving!"

She regarded me thoughtfully, her level brows puckered in a perplexed frown.

"Come!" I cried impatiently. "Get a move on that befogged brain of yours, or it'll be everlastingly too late."

Still she gazed at me in bewilderment.

"Hungry! Hungry!" I flung at her.

Again that word seemed to pierce her understanding, for she rose briskly.

"The cow," she said, smiling at me over her shoulder.

"Good Lord, girl! You don't expect me to eat the cow, do you?" I cried.

She nodded complacently, and, going to the shelf, took down a small tin pail, a can and a sunbonnet which she gravely put on her head, though it was raining heavily outside.

I watched her curiously, having no idea what she was up to. Neither had she for some time, it seemed, for there was a look of pitiful bewilderment on

her thin little face. She wandered about the room uncertainly, pausing oftenest in front of the door, as though it drew her irresistibly.

"Oh, you get it," she said at last, desperately, thrusting the can and pail in my hands.

"The cow?" I asked, greatly amused.

"Yes," she said hesitatingly. "You put that on it."

"That" was salt in the can, I found by tasting it.

"Do you want me to throw salt on its tail to catch it?" I laughed. "Or put it on to make it more palatable after it is caught?"

"Oh, I know!" she cried suddenly in a tone of relief, and, seizing the pail and can from my hands, plunged out in the storm.

Faint and sick from hunger, for I was still very weak, I sat where she left me, alternately wondering if I'd better follow and try to coax her in out of the storm, and cursing her precious relatives for letting her run wild in this fashion.

She returned in a few minutes, breathless and drenched but triumphant, carrying a brimming pail of milk in her hands. Ah! So this was the cow, I thought, taking it gratefully. I learned later that a certain old Jersey came daily to this far end of the pasture on the chance of getting a bit of salt, and, when Lois was rational enough, give a quart or two of milk in return.

I poured part of the milk into a cracked bowl—the whole place was furnished in much the same fashion as was my sister's playhouse when we were children—and greedily attacked the big loaf of homemade bread. I never thought of Lois till roused by a shivering sigh; and when I saw her pale, pinched face and the wistful expression in her big eyes, I called myself many kinds of a selfish brute as I hastily poured some milk into a handleless sugar bowl and gave it to her with a generous chunk of bread.

"Why, you poor daffy—dill," I added hastily. "I believe *you* are hungry. Did you have any dinner?"

She pondered a while, then answered, "No."

"Or any breakfast?"

"Some gooseberries. There was no one up when I left," she replied, breaking her bread into the milk. She ate ravenously, yet with a certain refinement withal, paying no attention to me when I put the blanket from the bed over her wet knees and my coat about her shoulders. At length she carelessly dropped her empty dish on the ground, and, leaning back in the chair, began to talk and laugh to herself. She looked quite comfortable; her lips were less blue, and she seemed warm, if not exactly dry.

"Lois," I said when her uncanny muttering and the dismal patter of the rain had gotten on my nerves, "Lois, did you arrange the pictures?"

She nodded, smiling.

"What is this?" I asked, indicating one.

"Paul Potter's Red Bull," she replied unhesitatingly.

"And this?" I questioned, pointing to another.

Again she answered correctly; and soon, to my great astonishment, we were deep in a discussion of the relative merits of the different schools. She certainly understood her subject and expressed herself well, though seeming to have some difficulty in distinguishing between fact and fancy. I understood the reason, for many of the "scribblin's" were quaint, chimerical tales about these very pictures.

There was one, the largest and best among the group of Dutch paintings, that had affected me strangely from the moment I had entered the shelter. There was a bit of gray sky and sea, a tall man stalking along the barren, rugged shore with a tiny baby in his arms and one of larger size toddling at his side; and, even without the hopeless grief on the man's face, the picture expressed loneliness and despair.

Ah! I had it now! One of the first "scribblin's" I had found had been an exquisite story about this same picture; and, so strong an impression had it made on me that, though the picture

did not express it, I could plainly see the newmade grave in the rocky, hillside cemetery behind him and the whitewashed cottage in the village below, in which henceforth there would be a vacant chair. I could see him as he passed through the door, and I stifled a sob as, with a great hoarse cry of, "Margot! Margot!" he caught a worn gray shawl from its nail behind the door and kissed it passionately.

The story, written on the back of a circus poster, had ended abruptly here. If only I could get her to tell the rest! She was sitting silent and listless now, her hands clasped in her lap, her eyes fixed on the floor.

"With infinite tenderness he laid the sleeping child in the cradle—"

I began softly, quoting from her story. To my delight she raised her head and looked directly at the picture.

"—lifted the tired Gretta to the settle; then, locking his shaking hands as though for strength, he faced the desolate room."

"Jan Ritter was not an emotional man," Lois said in a reminiscent tone. Then she paused, and I scarcely breathed till, with her eyes still fixed dreamily on the picture, she continued: "But stern and austere."

Clearly and logically she unfolded the story before me. Once or twice she digressed, but with a little quiet urging on my part she went on. Once I thought she would fall asleep or faint, I scarcely knew which, in spite of me. I hastily gave her the rest of the milk, and, seeming greatly strengthened, she proceeded to the end. It was a powerful tale, the terrific climax leaving me stunned and breathless.

She slept from utter exhaustion for a time, and, tired and weak from the strain, I sat upon the bed of fir boughs and watched her. The rain had ceased when she awoke, and it was nearing sunset.

"Are you rested?" I asked.

She laid her thin brown hand on mine and smiled up at me, a saner light in her eyes than I had seen there before.

"Yes," she said in her soft voice, "and warm—dry and warm."

Instinctively my hand turned and my fingers closed upon her wrist, and, in that simple, familiar action, something that I had thought dead or paralyzed by my long illness, surged within me: the desire to help—heal—to put color and flesh on those wan cheeks, light and reason in those lusterless eyes. I was something of an alienist, and, the Lord willing, would be more.

"I walked up the lane with a girl last night," I remarked casually to Mrs. Dearborn as she poured my coffee the next morning. "She went on around to the kitchen door."

"Oh—why, it must have been Lois," she returned with some embarrassment.

"Lois?" I repeated inquiringly.

"Yes, my daughter; she's the middle one. Grace, the oldest, married a storekeeper down to the Point—done real well, though not as well as Lily. She married a doctor over to Salem, and has—"

"But Lois?" I interrupted impatiently. "She seemed—well, a little strange."

"Strange! She's plumb crazy!" put in the crab apple tree, who had just entered the room.

"She ain't just right," admitted Mrs. Dearborn reluctantly. "She never was like the others. They was all fat and healthy, wasn't they, Susan?" Susan agreed, and Mrs. Dearborn continued:

"And they was always in for a good time, and didn't care a rap for books, an'—"

"An' Lois has had her nose in one since she could walk," interpolated Miss Crabby.

"Before," corrected her sister. "And has allers been dreamy and no 'count, ain't she, Susan? Now, Lily—"

"But her present condition—what was the immediate cause?" I interrupted. "I am a physician, you know, and I might be able to help her."

"No, you can't," she said decisively. "All the doctors hereabouts have had a whack at her, and none of 'em done her any good. Why, Lily's husband, he—"

"But the cause?" I interrupted again.

"Well, you see, 'twas this way," she began, sitting down beside me and beginning to roll a scrap of bread into little pellets. "The summer before Lois was born I nursed her pa's sister, Lois. She was mighty odd, too—all the Dearborns was; allers readin' an' scribblin' an' talkin' about things no one but themselves could understand. Well, all that summer Lois an' Ned—Lois's pa—talked poetry an' painted sunsets an' raved over moonlights while I waited on 'em, they both bein' pindlin'; an' when my Lois come she wasn't more'n a shadow, was she, Susan? Now, when Lily was born, she was *that* fat—"

"And the elder Lois?" I questioned.

"Oh, she died that fall, leavin' little Lois—I wanted her named Daisy mighty bad, but they wouldn't have it—a thousand dollars for her education."

"Education, fiddlesticks!" snorted her sister. "See what it's done to her!"

"An' she grewed up just like her Aunt Lois—an' her pa," Mrs. Dearborn continued mournfully. "I tried awful hard to get her to put her money into the farm or something, but she wouldn't hear to it. Neither would her guardian. Now, Lily's grandma left her a hundred, an'—"

"But her condition?" I reminded.

"Well, she went off to school, an' was brought home in three years—like she is. The head teacher at Burn More wrote me a letter to say she was very studious—had done four years in three, whatever that means—and was beloved by all."

"As though *that* done us any good!" put in the crabbed one wrathfully.

"An' ever since then she's just mooned around," continued her mother—"over in the grove an' down in the orchard most of the time."

I smiled to myself. "Where does she stay when it storms?" I asked craftily. "I have never seen her about home."

"In the sugar house, most likely,"

put in Susan—"though she does come home powerful wet sometimes."

"She appeared rather anæmic to me," I remarked carelessly, "as though she needed good, nourishing food."

"Land knows what she lives on!" her mother returned with equal indifference. "Pickles, an' green gooseberries, an' such stuff. Now, Lily—"

"There's the mail carrier," I interrupted, and escaped.

Poor Lois, I thought as I strolled down to the mail box. I saw plainly that I could expect no assistance from her mother or aunt. Whatever was done for her, I must do alone; and I realized that the quieter I kept in doing it, the better it would be for both of us.

There was but one letter in the box, and it was for me. The morning was chill after the storm, but I read it with the perspiration oozing from every pore and a feeling of the most utter helplessness I ever experienced.

It was from Randall, my lawyer and one time college friend:

It is no use, old man. I have worked like a horse and schemed like a Shylock, but it has gone beyond recovery. Of course, in years to come—but that is too uncertain to bank on. You blithering idiot, why did you put all your eggs in one basket?

Hope you are better; that the Jersey cream, warm from the—condensed milk can; that the eggs, fresh from the—cold storage—

I read no more, but, mopping my brow, set about taking stock of my assets. It didn't take long. A few hundred dollars of accounts that my debtors wouldn't fall over each other in paying; a battered, shattered old carcass that needed mending in a dozen places; and a pocketbook, as lean and hungry-looking as I. To go back to my practice was out of the question, for a week of it would probably put me on my back for good and all; and I knew no one to whom I could say, "Give me of your wherewithal."

Well, I thought, starting back to the house, a man must eat and a man must sleep; and the Widow Dearborn was providing both as reasonably as I could hope to find them. I'd give her a chance at the former right now.

"Will you put up a big lunch for me, Mrs. Dearborn?" I asked. "I may not be home till bedtime, so put in a small skillet if you have one to spare, for I intend to fry what fish I get."

I did, a few hours later, over a bed of coals in Lois's fireplace. I also cooked the potatoes she had offered me the day before and the egg, with four more just like it; and these, with the frills Mrs. Dearborn had provided and the quart contributed by the Jersey, made quite an elaborate dinner.

Lois became much interested in its preparation, and helped till I caught her putting cow bait, instead of sugar, on the handful of strawberries I had picked. After that I played she was Queen Something-or-other and that I was her scullery boy, and I heard her laugh for the first time when I got soot on my nose.

The unwonted labor, the clear, invigorating air, and the appetizing odors had their effect; and it pains me—at least, the more refined side of me—to admit that I partook so extravagantly that I had left only enough sense and strength to crawl off in the shadow of the rock where, for some hours, I rivaled a gorged boa constrictor.

When at length I came back to the shelter, there was a dent in Lois's pillow, but she was sitting outside, brighter than I had yet seen her; and for the first time she seemed aware of my presence, for she looked up in surprise and some alarm as I approached her.

"Why—who—where did you come from?" she asked, frowning.

"Have you never seen me before?" I asked, sitting down beside her.

"Seems to me I have," she said, eyeing me critically. "What is your name?"

"McAlpin," I replied promptly. "Doctor McAlpin."

There seemed to be something reassuring about the prefix, for she relaxed, and, picking up her pencil, resumed her writing.

"What did you wish to ask me?" she said patiently.

Poor girl! She had been "asked"

to little purpose in the past, it seemed. Would my asking be productive of no better results?

I understood her case pretty thoroughly when I was done with her. Of course the poor, clouded brain remained a sealed book to me, but I was certain that a general toning up of the system, strengthening food and proper care would work wonders.

After I had concluded my examination I read one of her books for an hour or two, and she contentedly wrote and whispered to herself, smiling sociably at me from time to time. I stayed till I saw her make a good supper from the remnants of our noonday feast, confiscating the salted strawberries, however, when I found her abstractedly eating them as she softly recounted how the loon flouted the pelican. It was very funny, and I found myself laughing more than once as I tidied up the place for the night.

I had purposely kept very busy all day, hoping to be so tired by night that my financial would have to take a back seat for my physical condition, but it was no use; the corn husk mattress had scarcely ceased rustling beneath my weary carcass before I was deep in ways and means. One by one I went over my accomplishments and dismissed them just as methodically, as being beyond the strength of the poor caricature of a man I had become. True, writing—or scribblin', as I had learned to designate it—had once been among them, and while the remembrance of certain goodly cheques warmed my heart, the thought of the maddening delays and rejections immediately cooled it again. Too, I doubted if my mental apparatus would bear the strain of a metaphysical spasm—the only kind of “scribblin’” I could do. Now, if I only could write a story, I’d stand a better chance—Great heaven! Lois’s story of the picture! I had never read anything so strong, so weird!

I sprang out of bed and into my dressing gown, and panting with excitement, seized pencil and pad. Again I saw the rugged shore, lapped by the

dark, storm-driven sea, the newmade grave and the anguished face of the man as he carried his motherless little ones to the village below. To my surprise, I found myself telling the story in Lois’s exact words, so great an impression had it made upon me; consequently, I had finished it before morning; also a letter to an editor friend that ran thus:

DEAR OLD SKINNY:

For the sake of the days when you used to beat me up regularly for practice, please waive ceremony, red tape or whatever fetish governs a magazine office, and tell me if the inclosed has any merit. Please find stamps inclosed—if you can. I can’t, for I haven’t the price.

In the morning, borrowing a leaf from Lois’s book, I captured an old nag grazing along the roadside, and, hooking my heels on his all too apparent ribs, trotted off to town to mail my letter, get some medicine for Lois and some necessary supplies for the daffy shack perched high on the mountain’s hip.

To my great joy, Lois knew me when I reached the shelter shortly before noon, tired, hot and dusty. Talking to herself, she seized the pail and hurried to the spring; but when she lagged back a few minutes later, her eyes held no remembrance of me in their shallow depths; and, if I hadn’t stopped her, she would have emptied the pail on a bed of ferns growing near.

The following week I worked with an almost feverish energy. Every morning I stood about, greedily watching Mrs. Dearborn fill my knapsack, unblushingly seconding her remarks about my marvelous appetite. Then, with the pack on my back and rod and gun in my hand, I’d fare forth toward the river that lay in an opposite direction from Luny Mount; but, in the grassy ravine below the house, I would halt at a welcoming whinny and, soon astride the angular beast, accoutrements hung on convenient knobs, and a sack of provender—the spoils of a midnight raid—in front of me, I’d amble off in the other direction.

I made many improvements about the place, especially in the cooking

facilities; and saw to it that Lois had good, nourishing food at regular intervals, and frequent rests; and, through it all, I tried to get some form and method into her "scribblin'." I watched her closely, keeping pencil and paper ever within her reach; and I found that when she was in one of her dreamy, creative moods, that a little suggestion or encouragement was all she needed to keep her going for hours. I had to watch closely that she did not digress, for the whirl of a bird's wing above, the scolding of a squirrel as it eyed us from some nearby limb, sometimes even my uncontrollable laughter at some witticism, was enough to start her off on a new tack, and amazing were the things I wrote before I noticed the digression.

DEAR OLD BUSTER,

ran the letter that came at the end of the week, the most satisfying letter I ever received in my life.

Any merit, do you ask? It is all merit! Bristles with it to the extent of the inclosed cheque, which will, I hope, relieve the stringency in stamps; and if you don't want me to resume my former practice, you will shove along others like it at frequent intervals to your own loving

SKINNY.

The long, glorious summer days slipped away unheeded, and before I realized that they were gone Luny Mount had tired of her modest green and was decking herself in flaming orange and red. To one who for years had been in the hurry and turmoil of a great city and had shared its sorrows and pain as well as its meager joys—and had gotten badly smashed in the sharing—these long, quiet days on the mountain were a revelation. I felt new strength and life stealing through my veins, new hopes, new ambitions creeping into my jaded brain for, ever before me, urging me to greater efforts, was the strangest, most wonderful transformation scene that man ever witnessed.

Lois reminded me of a poor, frost locked bud that the cold and storms had mercilessly beaten into the earth; but, at the first warm ray of sunshine,

it had raised its shrinking head; one by one its beautiful petals opened to the light, till all that it lacked for its perfect flowering was the touch of a Master Hand. That I could not give; but I had dreams of that same Master Hand, for a continual stream of "scribblin's" poured forth into the world from Luny Mount, and a trickling, tinkling rivulet ran back from it into the bank in the village below.

"Mack," Lois said one night, as we stood on a rocky spur far up the mountain, watching a stormy sunset—"McAlpin" had proved too much for her at first, and she complained that "Doctor" always inclined her to show her tongue, so "Mack" I had been since I had been anything—"Mack," she said, wistfully laying her plump brown hand on my arm and raising her lovely eyes to mine, "I do so dread the nights."

"Why?" I asked in surprise. "I should think that after our busy, rather strenuous, days, you would welcome them."

"I would, but—oh, don't you see?" she cried desperately. "When I say good night to you I have no assurance that I will know you in the morning."

I had known for some time that she was aware of her condition, but she had never before mentioned it.

"I asked mother if she did not think I might go to the city for treatment," she continued a little bitterly, slipping her fingers confidently within mine.

"And what did she say?" I asked curiously.

"That she guessed if there was any money for doctoring we'd give it to Lily's husband and keep it in the family."

We both laughed at the characteristic speech, but her eyes were troubled when we said the dreaded good night.

A week later I silently approached the shelter, my heart alternately filled with hope and dread.

"There is your patient," I said at length to the grizzled, keen-eyed man at my side. He stopped short and regarded her for some time, then turned to me; and though his smile was quizzical, his eyes were very kind.

"Ah, I see," he remarked, and looked again.

As my eyes followed his I could scarcely realize that the gloriously beautiful girl before me was the poor, drabbed Ophelia of a few months before. She was bending over some sewing in her lap, and her bright, piquant face, with its flushed cheeks and parted, crimson lips, was turned toward us. The glossy braids were now decorously coiled about her small head, a cluster of crimson berries glowing in their midst. The pretended sale of a case of butterflies, in whose preparation she was an adept, had provided the neat, blue serge dress, which was changed for the old calico each night before she went home. Her trim, well shod little feet were thrust out in front of her, and she was humming one of her own poems that I had set to music.

"Oh, my God!" I cried, faint with dread. The Master was at my side; if he failed—

My smothered exclamation aroused her, and, though greatly surprised at seeing a stranger, she welcomed him so charmingly, and, later, answered his questions so intelligently that I could see he was much impressed. The quaint shelter, with its pictures and books, greatly interested him, and the old atlas with its strange botanical treasures, and the cases of beetles and butterflies, filled him with admiration. Then he was thirsty, and must needs traipse up to the spring with her, where he stayed so long, admiring the view, that, on his return, I had to remind him that tides and trains wait for no man.

He agreed that it was high time we started, then unconsciously sniffed the air and glanced toward the primitive fireplace on which something savory was cooking. His gaze wandered to the shelter, and, at length, to us, longing and indecision written on his rugged face. Suddenly it brightened.

"Really, I feel that I have not completely diagnosed the case," he said with his most professional air. "Now, the six-thirty train—" We laughed heartily, and Lois rose and put on her blue gingham apron.

That night Lois and I sat long before the fire we had kindled near the shelter. There was a chill tang in the air, and the trees sighed drearily in the rising wind.

"Mack," she cried suddenly, "you must go back to your practice."

"I am not well enough," I said feebly.

She laughed derisively. "You've been well enough for two months," she declared.

"Why didn't you tell me before?" I asked craftily.

"Why, I—oh, Mack, I'd have died of loneliness after I knew enough to be lonely; but now—"

"Oh! You think the sanitarium will be so gay that you'll not miss me?" I interrupted.

She glanced at me reproachfully. "I'm not going," she said quietly.

"Not going!" I cried in surprise. "Why, Lois! You know he said there wasn't a doubt—that it was sure—"

"So is the sum he mentioned when I asked him about it up at the spring," she said drily.

"But, Lois," I urged, "you know that investment of mine has taken a turn for the better and—"

"I can't take *your* money, Mack," she said decidedly. "I've had a suspicion all along that the sale of the butterflies has not entirely paid for all the books and things we've had." I suppose I must have looked guilty, for she continued reproachfully: "I know they have not." And she buried her face in her hands.

This was the time I had long waited for, though its coming was not exactly what I had anticipated. She had never known the cause of my intense interest in the "scribblin's," for I had carefully kept the magazines containing them out of sight, an easy matter as long as I was censor. I had thought the time might come when I would need the sudden shock and spur of that knowledge; and now I realized that it had come.

Going to the shelter, I brought a bag and, unlocking it, laid a pile of magazines in her lap. Opening the top-

most, I turned to a *fac simile* of the picture on the wall; and she stared dumbly from one to the other. Another page, and she saw poor Jan Ritter kissing the old gray shawl; and then I silently pointed to the signature at the beginning of the story.

Wide-eyed and breathless, she eagerly turned the pages of the other magazines, and then, locking her shaking hands in her lap, looked at me. I had thought her beautiful before; but now, added to the radiant joy that flooded her face, was a certain new dignity that transfigured her. She did not speak for some time, and then it was a flood of questions that I answered as best I could.

"Oh, Mack!" she cried happily. "I can scarcely believe it—I, the poor daffydill of Luny Mount!" She laughed, but there was a little catch in her voice.

"Wait! There is still more," I hinted darkly, and laid two small books in her lap, one a bank book, and the other an account of one McAlpin with Lois Dearborn.

"I am your debtor to the tune of a hundred or so," I said abjectly. "But if you will give me time, I'll pay it all back."

"Don't talk of repaying me," she cried impulsively, giving me both her hands, "after all you've done for me. Oh, Mack, my whole life—a dozen lives—"

"I want but one, dear," I said, drawing her gently toward me.

"One—one what?" she faltered, holding herself back, her hands on my breast.

"To share one life with you," I whispered softly, looking deep into the beautiful eyes so near my own. I saw them widen with wonder and surprise, then grow misty and tender, and, at length, waver beneath my steady gaze. It took all the self-control I possessed, and it had reached a high state of cultivation during the past months, to keep from taking her in my yearning arms, and telling her that life without her—But the expression in her eyes had changed.

"Let me go," she said chokingly, trying to disengage the hands I held on my breast. "It's—it's pity. You've given me what little mind I have, and now—"

"It's not pity," I declared, seizing her and crushing her fiercely to me. "It's the deepest, truest love that man ever had for woman. It's pity you should have for me—I, whom these precious 'scribblin's' have fed and clothed all summer." She looked her astonishment, and, pursuing my advantage, I continued:

"I came to Luny Mount—and you—sick and penniless. Look at me now, and tell me who should talk of gratitude, and who of pity!"

She pondered for some time, her cheek against mine, my arms locked about her. Then she whispered something that I bent my dizzy head to hear.

"You say you pity me, dearest?" I murmured incoherently.

"I didn't!" she said shortly. "I said you ought to be a lawyer."



SINS find a man out—and so does the bill collector.



A MAN on the fence is apt to jump at conclusions.

ILS EN PARLENT

Par ABEL HERMANT

Une plage nouveau-née, à quelques enjambées de Sangatte. Vingt-cinq chalets démontables et une église de style roman, mais du même âge que les chalets. Une de ces bicoques est habitée par la famille Jurques-Bouché-Durand, qui se compose de quatre personnes: Mme JURQUES (c'est elle qui a l'argent), Mme BOUCHÉ-DURAND (VALÉRIE), sa fille; BOUCHÉ-DURAND (JULIEN), et le petit Bouché-Durand, PIERROT, âgé de douze ans juste.

C'est dimanche matin, 25 juillet. Mme Jurques, sur ses bonnes jambes de soixante ans, revient de la messe, avec sa fille, Julien Bouché-Durand, qui ne fréquente pas l'église, les attendant sur le pas de la porte.

MME. JURQUES, *de très loin, le verbe haut.*—Eh bien? Et Pierre?

JULIEN.—Tiens! Il n'est pas allé à la messe avec vous?

MME. JURQUES.—Non. C'est d'une inconvenance!

VALÉRIE.—Je pensais le trouver ici. Je suis mortellement inquiète.

JULIEN.—Calme-toi.

MME. JURQUES.—Je parie qu'il est sorti sur sa bicyclette.

JULIEN.—Probablement.

VALÉRIE.—Tu n'en sais rien!

MME. JURQUES.—A quelle heure est-il sorti?

JULIEN.—Je ne m'en doute même pas.

VALÉRIE, *à tue-tête.*—Léocadie!

C'est la bonne qui répond à ce simple nom. Elle est occupée à dresser le couvert. Elle met le nez à la fenêtre (*window*) de la salle à manger.

LÉOCADIE.—Quoi?

(Elle n'est pas stylée.)

VALÉRIE.—A quelle heure est sorti monsieur Pierre?

LÉOCADIE.—Je ne saurais dire à madame, bien que je l'aie entendu: mais je n'ai pas frotté d'allumette. C'était la nuit. Il pouvait être sur les deux heures.

VALÉRIE.—Oh! . . .

MME. JURQUES.—Il a découché! (*A Julien.*) Vous entendez, votre fils a découché!

JULIEN.—Oh! . . . A douze ans. . .

MME. JURQUES, *à Léocadie.*—Servez!

VALÉRIE.—Quand Pierrot n'est pas là!

MME. JURQUES.—On ne va pas me faire attendre pour mon petit-fils!

VALÉRIE.—Je n'ai pas faim.

MME. JURQUES.—Moi non plus. Mais c'est une question de principe.

On n'ose pas désobéir à la vieille dame (c'est elle qui a l'argent). On se met à table. Hors-d'œuvre. Crevettes. Valérie n'essaie même pas. Julien les épluche si curieusement qu'il peut ensuite les avaler comme des pilules. Mme Jurques engloutit les trois quarts du plat: elle a le magnifique appétit de son âge.

Soudain, on entend, dehors, un effroyable tintamarre: c'est Pierrot, dont la bicyclette est munie d'une sirène, d'un sifflet à roulette, d'une trompette à trois notes et d'une trompe. Il joue simultanément de ces quatre instruments. Mme Jurques se bouche les oreilles. Valérie et Julien courent à la fenêtre en poussant des cris inarticulés.

ENSEMBLE.—Toi! C'est toi!

PIERROT, *d'une voix qui n'a rien d'humain.*—Papa! . . . Maman! . . . Ça y est! . . .

LE PÈRE ET LA MÈRE ensemble, *tonjours.*—Quoi?

PIERROT.—Il a . . . volé! . . . Il a . . . passé! . . . Il a . . . atterri!

JULIEN, *bouleversé.*—Ah! mon Dieu!

VALÉRIE.—Mais entre donc!

Pierrot entre. Il suffoque, il ruisselle, il s'effondre comme le soldat de Marathon.

JULIEN.—Comment le sais-tu?

PIERROT.—Je l'ai vu! Je l'ai vu partir! Et je suis resté à Sangatte jusqu'à l'arrivée de la dépêche . . . Je suis revenu d'un train!

VALÉRIE.—Dans quel état!

MME. JURQUES.—Il pourrait me dire bonjour.

JULIEN.—As-tu des détails? .

PIERROT.—Aucun!

VALÉRIE.—Va te changer.

MME. JURQUES.—S'il commençait par me présenter ses excuses? Lorsque les enfants de cet âge font attendre les personnes âgées. . . .

JULIEN.—Oh! écoutez, chère mère, franchement. . . . Il y a des circonstances. . . .

MME. JURQUES.—Bien, si vous lui donnez raison. . . .

VALÉRIE, *suppliante*.—Julien! . . .

(Il hausse les épaules. Elle éponge Pierrot.)

JULIEN.—Il a un tricot de laine, il ne peut pas attraper froid.

VALÉRIE.—Assieds-toi, prends des crevettes. . . .

PIERROT, *avec un regard de travers à Mme. Jurques*.—S'il en reste.

JULIEN.—Et raconte-nous.

PIERROT, *dévorant*.—Voilà . . . J'ai filé . . . avant deux heures. . . . J'étais sûr . . . quelque chose me disait . . . que ce serait . . . pour ce matin. . . .

MME. JURQUES, *avec ironie*.—Ton petit doigt?

PIERROT.—Non, c'est le tien. . . . Quand je suis arrivé sur la falaise, l'oiseau était déjà hors de sa cage . . . J'ai assisté à l'essai . . . Et puis il a piqué droit vers le large. Oh! ça m'a fait tout drôle. Ça m'a serré là . . . Et puis on l'a perdu de vue. Et on attendait. Et puis la dépêche. Voilà.

MME. JURQUES.—C'est tout? Comme il raconte bien!

JULIEN.—Il dit ce qu'il a à dire, cet enfant!

MME. JURQUES.—Oh! pardon . . . (A Julien.) Vous ne déjeunez pas?

JULIEN.—J'ai l'appétit . . . (Geste.) coupé. (Elle ricane.) Vous êtes extraordinaire, vous! Voilà tout l'effet que ça vous fait?

MME. JURQUES.—Pas plus.

JULIEN.—Mais vous êtes donc en bois?

VALÉRIE.—Mon ami, à l'âge de ma-

man. . . .

MME. JURQUES.—Trop aimable.

JULIEN.—Mais moi, si j'avais l'âge

de ta mère, je me dirais: "Sapristi! Je suis bien content de ne pas être mort avant d'avoir vu une chose pareille!"

MME. JURQUES.—Merci.

JULIEN.—Ce n'est pas possible, vous le faites exprès!

MME. JURQUES.—Pour vous taquiner.

JULIEN.—Vous ne sentez pas que le 25 juillet 1909 restera une date . . . inoubliable . . . dans l'histoire de l'humanité, de la civilisation?

MME. JURQUES.—C'est vous qui le dites.

JULIEN.—Vous lirez les journaux demain.

MME. JURQUES.—Oh! les journaux . . . D'abord, est-ce que j'y monterai jamais, dans cette machine, moi? Ni vous non plus!

JULIEN.—Mais j'espère bien que si! Pourquoi pas?

VALÉRIE.—Oh! Julien, je t'en prie!

PIERROT.—Oh! là là! Si tu crois que je m'en priverai!

VALÉRIE, *éperdue*.—Pierre!

MME. JURQUES.—Voilà! De mon temps, les enfants étaient accoutumés à se priver de tout. . . .

JULIEN.—Ce qui était d'ailleurs stupide. . . . Mais il ne s'agit pas de ça. Quel égoïsme! On ne juge pas . . . de son point de vue personnel . . . un événement . . . dont les conséquences . . . universelles . . . sont incalculables . . . et qui va peut-être changer . . . oui, changer la face du monde.

MME. JURQUES.—J'entends dire ça tous les trois ans.

JULIEN.—Vous l'entendez dire? Vous pourriez le voir! Mais vous ne vous rendez pas compte, parce que . . . c'est trop près, vous n'avez pas de recul: le miracle s'accomplit sous votre nez.

MME. JURQUES.—Le miracle! Quel miracle? Est-ce que vous avez des ailes depuis ce matin? Il en a poussé à ce monsieur Blériot. Sa tentative a réussi: elle aurait peut-être échoué demain. Jamais son invention ne passera dans la pratique.

JULIEN.—Qu'est-ce que vous en savez?

MME. JURQUES.—Je vous le dis, avec l'expérience de mon âge.

PIERROT.—Pffuit!

MME. JURQUES.—Tu es très bien élevé, mon petit ami, je te fais tous mes compliments.

JULIEN.—Pourquoi l'invention de Blériot ne passerait-elle pas dans la pratique?

MME. JURQUES.—Parce que ça tombe sous le sens.

JULIEN.—En voilà une raison!

VALÉRIE.—Julien!

MME. JURQUES.—Et puis ce serait gai, si nous nous mettions tous à planer!

PIERROT.—Ce serait très gentil.

MME. JURQUES.—En famille?

JULIEN.—Le moins possible.

MME. JURQUES.—Le ciel obscurci par des migrations d'a-ré-o-planes!

Elle articule ce mot avec difficulté, et elle prononce *aréoplane*, naturellement.

PIERROT, *rectifiant*.—*Aéro*, grand'mère.

MME. JURQUES.—On ne reprend pas ses ascendants. . . Nous avons déjà vos automobiles qui saccagent les belles routes de France: laissez-moi le ciel!

JULIEN.—Allez-y!

VALÉRIE.—Oh! Julien! . . .

MME. JURQUES, *dans l'extase*.—Le ciel! Le beau ciel bleu!

PIERROT, *regardant la pluie tomber*.—C'est le cas de le dire.

MME. JURQUES.—J'estime peu la science, qui d'ailleurs a fait banque-route; mais j'ai le culte de la poésie.

JULIEN.—Je m'y attendais! Nous allons gâter la poésie du paysage. Nous avons déjà gâté celle de l'univers, quand nous vous avons enseigné que la terre tourne autour du soleil et que les étoiles ne sont pas des clous d'or fichés dans un plafond.

MME. JURQUES.—Respectez mes sentiments religieux. Je sais trop que vous ne croyez à rien; mais vous pourriez épargner la foi de mon petit-fils, qui vient de faire sa première communion, et qui manque la messe pour aller voir voler un monsieur!

JULIEN.—Tout simplement.

MME. JURQUES.—Aujourd'hui dimanche! Traverser le pas de Calais un dimanche! C'est ça qui a dû faire un joli effet en Angleterre! Compliments. C'est ça qui relèvera le prestige de la France!

JULIEN.—Ça n'y nuira tout de même pas. D'ailleurs, le prestige de la France a-t-il tant que ça besoin d'être relevé? C'est vous qui le dites.

MME. JURQUES.—Je ne connais que vous qui disiez le contraire. Nous sommes la risée de l'Europe!

JULIEN.—Pas du tout!

MME. JURQUES.—Notre race s'en va.

JULIEN.—Mais non! . . . Ah! vous choisissez bien votre jour! . . . Voyons! . . . Vous ne sentez pas que l'homme . . . l'homme qui vient de conquérir l'empire des airs . . . mais les anciens l'auraient égalé à l'inventeur . . . de la charrue, de la meule . . . du feu! . . . Ils auraient fait de lui un héros . . . un demi-dieu!

MME. JURQUES, *d'une voix prodigieusement aiguë*.—Un demi-dieu!

VALÉRIE, *épouvantée*.—Maman! . . .

MME. JURQUES.—Laisse-moi tranquille, toi! . . . Un demi-dieu! Monsieur Blériot? Mais c'est un ingénieur!

JULIEN.—Eh bien?

MME. JURQUES.—Un simple bourgeois! Un père de famille! J'ai vu son portrait: il vous ressemble même physiquement!

JULIEN.—Ça n'empêche pas!

MME. JURQUES.—Vous m'avez accoutumée à tous les manques de respect, et pour bien me prouver que vous me considérez comme une bête, vous ne cessez pas de me monter des bateaux. Mais cette vourde-ci passe la permission.

JULIEN, *ahuri*.—Voyons, chère mère. . .

VALÉRIE.—Oh! maman, Julien n'a pas eu l'idée. . .

MME. JURQUES.—Je n'admettrai jamais qu'un homme qui vit en 1909 et qui porte des vestons soit un demi-dieu. J'en ai assez, la coupe déborde, je partirai ce soir même. Et. . . pas en a-ré-o-plane.

JULIEN.—Ça, je m'en doutais.

MME. JURQUES.—Je voyagerai tout bêtement comme on voyageait au temps de ma jeunesse.

JULIEN.—Vous prendrez la patache?

MME. JURQUES.—Non, monsieur: le rapide.

HAVOC

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

Synopsis of Previous Chapters

Arthur Dorward, a young American journalist in Vienna, secures for his paper a great "beat"—a full account of a private conference between the Emperor and the Czar, and attempts to get out of the country with his papers. On the train with him is David Bellamy, an English diplomatic agent, and several Austrian secret service men. Dorward is attacked by the Austrians, thrown from the train and his papers taken from him. Bellamy then plots to secure the papers and enlists the help of Louise Idiale, a Servian opera singer, who proceeds to encourage the attentions of Von Behrling, in charge of the Austrian party, and induces him to agree to sell the papers to the English Government. He turns over to Bellamy a packet, found to contain only blank paper, for which the English have paid twenty thousand pounds, and Bellamy is thereby discredited. Von Behrling is found murdered that same evening. Stephen Laverick, a broker, finds the body and takes with him the wallet found on the dead man. He uses the money to tide over a business crisis and helps his late partner, Arthur Morrison, to get out of the country. He buys off a man, James Shepherd, who has evidence tending to incriminate Morrison, and takes the latter's half-sister, Zoe Leneveu, to dinner at a restaurant, where he meets Mlle. Idiale. She visits him at his office, ostensibly to buy stocks, then invites him to come to the Opera and join her at supper later. There she charges him with knowledge of the pocketbook taken from the dead man, and demands that he deliver to her a document contained therein. He looks into the pocketbook at his office and finds the papers she has spoken of; he promises Mlle. Idiale to come to her apartment in the evening and bring them. During the day he discovers a plot to rob his safe. On his way to keep his appointment he is mysteriously attacked, but beats off his assailant. Arriving at his destination, he meets Lassen, Mlle. Idiale's manager, who attempts unsuccessfully to get possession of the papers. Bellamy later comes to the house and surprises Lassen, who has evidently been bribed by the Austrians. Laverick and Bellamy meet at a hotel; the former makes a clean breast of it all and agrees to turn the document over to Bellamy as soon as the hotel safe is opened in the morning. Miss Leneveu sees a startling headline in a newspaper.

This novel began in the September **SMART SET**. Back copies of the magazine may be had from any newsdealer or the publishers.

XXXVI

THERE it was on the front page of the paper—staring her in the face:

Early yesterday morning Mr. Stephen Laverick, of the firm of Laverick & Morrison, stockbrokers, Old Broad Street, was arrested at the Milan Hotel on the charge of being concerned in the murder of a person unknown, in Crooked Friars Alley, on Monday last. The accused, who made no reply to the charge, was removed to Bow Street police station. Particulars of his examination before the magistrates will be found on page 4.

There was a dull singing in her ears. An electric tram, coming up from the underground passage, seemed to bring

with it some sort of thunder from an unknown world. She staggered on, unseeing, gasping for breath. If she could find somewhere to sit down! If she could only rest for a moment! Then a sudden wave of strength came to her, the blood flowed once more in her veins—blood that was hot with anger, that stained her cheeks with a spot of red. It was the man she loved being made to suffer falsely. It was the fulfillment of their threat—a deliberate plot against him. The murderer of Crooked Friars Alley—she knew who that was—she knew! Perhaps she might help!

She had not the slightest recollection of the remainder of that walk, but she

found herself presently sitting in a quiet corner of the theater with the paper spread out before her. She read that Stephen Laverick had been brought before Mr. Rawson, the magistrate of Bow Street police court, on a warrant charging him with having been concerned with the murder of a person unknown, and that he had pleaded "Not guilty." Her eyes glittered as she read that the first witness called was Mr. Arthur Morrison, late partner of the accused. She read his deposition—that he had left Laverick at their offices at eleven o'clock on the night in question; that they were at that time absolutely without means, and had no prospect of meeting their engagements on the morrow. She read the evidence of Mr. Fenwick, bank manager, to the effect that Mr. Laverick had, on the following morning, deposited with him the sum of twenty thousand pounds in Bank of England notes, by means of which the engagements of the firm were duly met; that those notes had since been redeemed and that he had no idea of their present whereabouts. She read, too, the evidence of Adolf Kahn, an Austrian visiting the country upon private business, who deposed that he was in the vicinity just before midnight, that he saw a person whom he identified as the accused walking down the street and, after disappearing for a few minutes down the entry, return and reënter the offices from which he had issued. He explained his presence there by the fact that he was waiting for a clerk employed by the Goldfields Corporation, Limited, whose offices were close by. Further formal evidence was given, and a remand asked for. The accused's solicitor was on the point of addressing the court when Mr. Rawson was unfortunately taken ill. After waiting for some time, the case was adjourned until the next day, and the accused man was removed in custody.

Zoe laid down the paper and rose to her feet. She made her way to where the stage manager was superintending the erection of some new scenery.

"Mr. Heepman," she exclaimed, "I cannot stay to rehearsal. I have to go out."

He turned heavily round and looked at her. "Rehearsal postponed," he declared solemnly. "Will you be back for the evening performance, or shall we close the theater?"

His clumsy irony missed its mark. Her thoughts were too intensely focused upon one thing.

"I am sorry," she replied, turning away. "I will come back as soon as I can."

He called out after her and she paused.

"Look here," he said; "you were absent from the performance the other evening, and now you are skipping rehearsal without even waiting for permission. It can't be done, young lady. You must do your playing around some other time. If you're not here when you're called, you needn't trouble to turn up again. Do you understand?"

Her lips quivered and the sense of impending disaster which seemed to be brooding over her life became almost overwhelming.

"I'll come back as soon as I can," she promised, with a little break in her voice—"as soon as ever I can, Mr. Heepman."

She hurried out of the theater and took her place once more among the hurrying throng of pedestrians. Several people turned round to look at her. Her white face, tight drawn mouth and eyes almost unnaturally large seemed to have become the abiding place for tragedy. She herself saw no one. She would have taken a cab, but a glimpse at the contents of her purse dissuaded her. She walked steadily on to Jermyn Street, walked up the stairs to the third floor and knocked at her brother's door. No one answered her at first. She turned the handle and entered, to find the room empty. There were sounds, however, in the farther apartment, and she called out to him.

"Arthur," she cried, "are you there?"

"Who is it?" he demanded.

"It is I—Zoe!" she exclaimed.

"What do you want?"

"I want to speak to you, Arthur. I must speak to you. Please come as quickly as you can."

He growled something and in a few

moments appeared. He was wearing the morning clothes in which he had attended court earlier in the day, but the change in him was perhaps all the more marked by reason of this resumption of his old attire. His cheeks were hollow; his eyes scarcely for an instant seemed to lose that feverish gleam of terror with which he had returned from Liverpool. He knew very well what she had come about, and he began nervously to try and bully her.

"I wish you wouldn't come to these rooms, Zoe," he said. "I've told you before they're bachelors' apartments, and they don't like women about the place. What is it? What do you want?"

"I was brought here last time without any particular desire on my part," she answered, looking him in the face. "I've come now to ask you what accursed plot this is against Stephen Laverick! What were you doing in the court this morning—lying? What is the meaning of it, Arthur?"

"If you've come to talk rubbish like that," he declared roughly, "you'd better be off."

"No, it is not rubbish!" she went on fearlessly. "I think I can understand what it is that has happened. They have terrified you and bribed you until you are willing to do any despicable thing—even this. Your father was good to my mother, Arthur, and I have tried to feel toward you as though you were indeed a relation. But nothing of that counts. I want you to realize that I know the truth, and that I will not see an innocent man convicted while the guilty go free."

He moved a step toward her. They were on opposite sides of the small round table which stood in the center of the apartment.

"What do you mean?" he demanded hoarsely.

"Isn't it plain enough?" she exclaimed. "You came to my rooms a week or so ago, a terrified, broken down man. If ever there was guilt in a man's face, it was in yours. You sent for Laverick. He pitied you and helped you away. At Liverpool they would not let you embark—these men. They have brought you back here. You are their

tool. But you know very well, Arthur, that it was not Stephen Laverick who killed the man in Crooked Friars Alley! You know very well that it was not Stephen Laverick!"

"Why the hell should I know anything about it?" he asked fiercely.

A note of passion suddenly crept into her voice. Her little white hand, with its accusing forefinger, shot out toward him.

"Because it was you, Arthur Morrison, who committed that crime!" she cried; "and sooner than that another man should suffer for it, I will go to court myself and tell the truth."

He was, for the moment, absolutely speechless, pale as death, with nervously twitching lips and fingers. But there was murder in his eyes.

"What do you know about this?" he muttered.

"Never mind," she answered. "I know and I guess quite enough to convince me—and, I think, anybody else—that you are the guilty man. I would have helped you and shielded you, whatever it cost me, but I will not do so at Stephen Laverick's expense."

"What is Laverick to you?" he growled.

"He is nothing to me," she replied, "but the best of friends. Even were he less than that, do you suppose that I would let an innocent man suffer?"

He moistened his dry lips rapidly.

"You are talking nonsense, Zoe," he said—"nonsense! Even if there has been some little mistake, what could I do now? I have given my evidence. So far as I am concerned, the case is finished. I shall not be called again until the trial."

"Then you had better go to the magistrate tomorrow morning and take back your evidence," she declared boldly, "for if you do not I shall be there and I shall tell the truth."

"Zoe," he gasped, "don't try me too far! This thing has upset me. I'm ill. Can't you see it, Zoe? Look at me. I haven't slept for weeks. Night and day I've had the fear—the fear always with me. You don't know what it is—you can't imagine. It's like a terrible ghost,

keeping pace with you wherever you go, laying his icy finger upon you whenever you would rest, mocking at you when you try to drown thought even for a moment. Don't you try me too far, Zoe. I'm not responsible. Laverick isn't the man you think him to be. He isn't the man I believed. He did have that money—he did, indeed."

"That," she said, "is to be explained. But he is not a murderer."

"Listen to me, Zoe," Morrison continued, leaning across the table. "Come and stay with me for a time and we will go away for a week—somewhere to the seaside. We will talk about this and think it over. I want to get away from London. We will go to Brighton, if you like. I must do something for you, Zoe. I'm afraid I've neglected you a good deal. Perhaps I could get you a better part at one of the theaters. I must make you an allowance. You ought to be wearing better clothes."

She drew a little away. "I want nothing from you, Arthur," she said, "except this—that you speak the truth."

He wiped his forehead and struck the table before her. "But, good God, Zoe," he exclaimed, "do you know what it is that you are asking me? Do you want me to go into court and say: 'That isn't the man; it is I who am the murderer'? Do you want me to feel their hands upon my shoulder, to be put there in the dock and have all the people staring at me curiously because they know that before very long I am to stand upon the scaffold and have that rope around my neck and—"

He broke off with a low cry, wringing his hands like a child in a fit of impotent terror. But the girl in front of him never flinched.

"Arthur," she said, "crime is a terrible thing, but nothing in the world can alter its punishment. If it is frightful for you to think of this, what must it be for him? And you are guilty and he is not."

"I was mad!" Morrison went on, now almost beside himself. "Zoe, I was mad! I called there to have a drink. We were broke—the firm was broke. I'd a hundred or so in my pocket and I was going

to bolt the next day. And there, within a few yards of me, was that man, with such a roll of notes as I had never seen in my life. Five hundred pounds, every one of them, and a wad as thick as my fist! Zoe, they fascinated me. I had two drinks quickly and I followed him out. Somehow or other I found that I'd caught up a knife that was on the counter. I never meant to hurt him seriously, but I wanted some of those notes! I was leaving the next day for Africa and I hadn't enough money to make a fair start. I wanted it—my God, how I wanted money!"

"It couldn't have been worth—that!" she cried, looking at him wonderingly.

"I was mad," he continued. "I saw the notes and they went to my head. Men do wild things sometimes when they are drunk, or for love. I don't drink much, and I'm not overfond of women, but, my God, money is like the blood of my body to me! I saw it, and I wanted it—I wanted it, and I went mad! Zoe, you won't give me away? Say you won't!"

"But what am I to do?" she protested. "He must not suffer."

"He'll get off," Morrison assured her thickly. "I tell you, he'll get off. He's only to part with the document, which never belonged to him, and the charge will be withdrawn. They know who the murdered man was. They know where the money came from which he was carrying. I tell you, he can save himself. You wouldn't dream of sending me to the gallows, Zoe!"

"Stephen Laverick will never give up that document to those people," she declared. "I am sure of that."

"It's his own lookout," Morrison muttered. "He has the chance, anyway."

She turned toward the door. "I must go away," she said. "I must go away and think. It is all too horrible."

He came round the table swiftly and caught at her wrists.

"Listen," he said; "I can't let you go like this. You must tell me that you are not going to give me up. Do you hear?"

"I can make no promises, Arthur," she answered sadly, "only this—I shall

not let Stephen Laverick suffer in your stead."

He opened his hand and she shrank back, terrified, when she saw what it was that he was holding. Then he struck her down and without a backward glance fled out of the place.

XXXVII

LATE that afternoon the hall porter at the Milan Hotel, the *commissionnaire* and the chief *maitre d'hôtel* from the café, who happened to be in the hall, together with several others around the place who knew Stephen Laverick by sight, were treated to an unexpected surprise. A large closed motor car drove up to the front entrance and several men descended, among whom was Laverick himself. He nodded to the porter, and making his way without hesitation to the interior of the hotel presented his receipt at the cashier's desk and asked for his packet. The clerk looked up at him in amazement. He did not for the moment notice that the two men standing immediately behind bore the stamp of plain clothes policemen. He had only a few minutes ago finished reading the report of Laverick's examination before the magistrates and his remand until the morrow upon the charge of murder. His knowledge of English law was by no means perfect, but he was at least aware that Laverick's appearance outside the purlieu of the prison was an unusual happening.

"Your packet, sir!" he repeated in amazement. "Why, this is Mr. Laverick himself, is it not?"

"Certainly," was the quiet reply. "I am Stephen Laverick."

The clerk called the head cashier, who also stared at Laverick as though he were a ghost. They whispered together in the background for a moment, and their faces were a study in perplexity. Of Laverick's identity, however, there was no manner of doubt. Besides, the presence of what was obviously a very ample escort somewhat reassured them. The cashier himself came forward.

"We shall be exceedingly glad, Mr.

Laverick," he said drily, "to get rid of your packet. Your instructions were that we should disregard all orders to hand it over to any person whatsoever, and I may say that they have been strictly adhered to. We have, however, had two applications in your name this morning."

"They were both forgeries," Laverick declared.

The cashier hesitated. Then he leaned across the broad mahogany counter toward Laverick. One of the men who appeared to form part of the escort detached himself from them and approached a few steps nearer.

"This gentleman is your friend, sir?" the cashier asked, glancing toward him.

"He is my solicitor," Laverick answered, "and is entirely in my confidence. If you have anything to tell me, I should like Mr. Bellamy also to hear."

Bellamy, who was standing a little in the background, took his place by Laverick's side. The cashier, who knew him by sight, bowed.

"Besides these two forged orders, sir," he said, turning again to Laverick, "we have had a man who took a room in the hotel leave a small black bag here, which he insisted upon having deposited in our document safe. My assistant had accepted it and was actually locking it up when he noticed a faint sound inside which he could not understand. The bag was opened and found to contain an infernal machine which would have exploded in a quarter of an hour."

Bellamy drew his breath sharply between his teeth.

"We should have thought of that!" he exclaimed softly. "That's Kahn's work!"

"I seem to have given you a great deal of trouble," Laverick remarked quietly. "I gather, however, from what you say, that my packet is still in your possession?"

"It is, sir," the man assented. "We have two detectives from Scotland Yard here at the present moment, though, and we had almost decided to place it in their charge for greater security."

"It will be well taken care of from now on, I promise you," Laverick declared.

The cashier and his clerk led the way into the inner office. At their invitation Laverick and his solicitor followed, and a few yards behind came the two plain clothes policemen, Bellamy and the superintendent. The safe was opened and the packet placed in Laverick's hands. He passed it on at once to Bellamy, and immediately afterward the doorway behind was thronged with men, apparently ordinary loiterers around the hotel. They made a slow and exceedingly cautious exit. Once outside, Bellamy turned to Laverick with outstretched hand.

"*Au revoir* and good luck, old chap!" he said heartily. "I think you'll find things all right tomorrow morning."

He departed, forming one of a somewhat singular cavalcade—two of his friends on either side, two in front and two behind. It had almost the appearance of a procession. The whole party stepped into a closed motor car. Three or four men were lounging on the pavement and there was some excited whispering, but no one actually interfered. As soon as they had left the courtyard Laverick and his solicitor, with his own guard, reentered the motor car in which they had arrived, and drove back to Bow Street. Very few words were exchanged during the short journey. His solicitor, however, bade him good night cheerfully, and Laverick's bearing was by no means the bearing of a man in despair.

In Downing Street within the next half hour a somewhat remarkable little gathering took place. The two men chiefly responsible for the destinies of the nation—the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs—sat side by side before a small table. Facing them was Bellamy, and spread out in front were those few pages of foelscap, released from their envelope a few minutes ago for the first time since the hand of the great Chancellor himself had pressed down the seal. The Foreign Minister had just finished a translation for the benefit of his colleague, and the two men were silent, as men are in the presence of big events.

"Bellamy," the Prime Minister said

slowly, "you are willing to stake, I presume, your reputation upon the authenticity of this document?"

"My honor and my life, if you will," Bellamy answered earnestly. "That is no copy which you have there. On the contrary, the handwriting is the handwriting of the Chancellor himself."

The Prime Minister turned silently toward his colleague. The latter, whose eyes still seemed glued to those fateful words, looked up.

"All I can say is this," he remarked impressively, "that never in my time have I seen written words possessed of so much significance. One moment, if you please."

He touched the bell, and his private secretary entered at once from an adjoining room.

"Anthony," he said, "telephone to the Great Western Railway Company at Paddington. Ask for the station master in my name, and see that a special train is held ready to depart for Windsor in half an hour. Tell the station master that all ordinary traffic must be held up, but that the destination of the special is not to be divulged."

The young man bowed and withdrew.

"The more I consider this matter," the Foreign Minister went on, "the more miraculous does the appearance of this document seem. We know now why the Czar is struggling so frantically to curtail his visit—why he came, as it were, under protest, and seeks everywhere for an opportunity to leave before the appointed time. His health is all right. He has had a hint from Vienna that there has been a leakage. His special mission only reached Paris this morning. The President is in the country and their audience is not fixed until tomorrow. Rawson will go over with a copy of these papers and a dispatch from His Majesty by the nine o'clock train. It is not often that we have had the chance of such a *coup* as this."

He drew his chief a few steps away. They whispered together for several moments. When they returned, the Foreign Minister rang the bell again for his secretary.

"Anthony," he said, "Sir James and I

will be leaving in a few minutes for Windsor. Go round yourself to General Hamilton, telephone to Aldershot for Lord Neville and call round at the Admiralty Board for Sir John Harrison. Tell them all to be here at ten o'clock tonight. If I am not back, they must wait. If either of them has royal commands, you need only repeat the word 'Finisterre.' They will understand."

The young man once more withdrew. The Prime Minister turned back to the papers. "It will be worth a great deal," he remarked, with a grim smile, "to see His Majesty's face when he reads this."

"It would be worth a great deal more," his fellow statesman answered drily, "to be with his august cousin at the interview which will follow. A month ago the thought that war might come under our administration was a continual terror to me. Today things are entirely different. Today it really seems that if war does come it may be the most glorious happening for England of this century. You saw the last report from Kiel?"

Sir James nodded.

"There isn't a battleship or a cruiser worth a snap of the fingers south of the German Ocean," his colleague continued earnestly. "They are cooped up—safe enough, they think—under the shelter of their fortifications. Hamilton has another idea. Between you and me, Sir James, so have I. I tell you," he went on in a deeper and more passionate tone, "it's like the passing of a terrible nightmare, this. We have had ten years of panic, of nervous fears of a German invasion, and no one knows more than you and I, Sir James, how much cause we have had for those fears. It will seem strange if, after all, history has to write that chapter differently."

The secretary reentered and announced the result of his telephone interview with the superintendent at Paddington. The two great men rose. The Prime Minister held out his hand to Bellamy.

"Bellamy," he declared, "you've done us one more important service. There may be work for you within the next few weeks, but you've earned a rest

for a day or two, at any rate. There is nothing more we can do?"

"Nothing except a letter to the Home Secretary, Sir James," Bellamy answered. "Remember, sir, that although I have worked hard, the man to whom we really owe those papers is Stephen Laverick."

The Prime Minister frowned thoughtfully.

"It's a difficult situation, Bellamy," he said. "You are asking a great deal when you suggest that we should interfere in the slightest manner with the course of justice. You are absolutely convinced, I suppose, that this man Laverick had nothing to do with the murder?"

"Absolutely and entirely, sir," Bellamy replied.

"The murdered man has never been identified by the police," Sir James remarked. "Who was he?"

"His name was Rudolph Von Behrling," Bellamy announced, "and he was actually the Chancellor's nephew, also his private secretary. I have told you the history, sir, of those papers. It was Von Behrling who, without a doubt, murdered the American journalist and secured them. It was he who insisted upon coming to London instead of returning with them to Vienna, which would have been the most obvious course for him to have adopted. He was a pauper, and desperately in love with a certain lady who has helped me throughout this matter. He agreed to part with the papers for twenty thousand pounds, and the lady incidentally promised to elope with him the same night. I met him by appointment at that little restaurant in the city, paid him the twenty thousand pounds and received the false packet which you remember I brought to you, sir. As a matter of fact, Von Behrling, either by accident or design, and no man now will ever know which, left me with those papers which I was supposed to have bought in his possession, and also the money. Within five minutes he was murdered. Doubtless we shall know some time by whom, but it was not by Stephen Laverick. Laverick's share in the whole thing was nothing."

ing but this—that he found the pocket-book, and that he made use of the notes in his business for twenty-four hours to save himself from ruin. That was unjustifiable, of course. He has made atonement. The notes at this minute are in a safe deposit vault and will be returned intact to the fund from which they came. I want also to impress upon you, Sir James, the fact that Baron de Streuss offered one hundred thousand pounds for that letter.”

Sir James nodded thoughtfully. He stooped down and scrawled a few lines on half a sheet of notepaper.

“You must take this to Lord Estcourt at once,” he said, “and tell him the whole affair, omitting all specific information as to the nature of the papers. The thing must be arranged, of course.”

Half a dozen reporters, who had somehow got hold of the fact that the Prime Minister and his colleague from the Foreign Office were going down to Windsor on a special mission, followed them, but even they remained altogether in the dark as to the events which were really transpiring. They knew nothing of the interview between the Czar and his august host—an interview which in itself was a chapter in the history of these times. They knew nothing of the reason of their royal visitor's decision to prolong his visit instead of shortening it, or of his autograph letter to the President of France, which reached Paris even before the special mission from St. Petersburg had presented itself. The one thing which they did know, and that alone was significant enough, was that the Czar's foreign minister was cabled for that night to come to his master by special train from St. Petersburg. At the Austrian and German embassies, forewarned by a report from Baron de Streuss, something like consternation reigned. The Russian Ambassador, heckled to death, took refuge at Windsor under pretense of a command from his royal master. The happiest man in London was Prince Rosmaran.

XXXVIII

At midday on the following morning Laverick stepped down from the dock at Bow Street and in company with his friends left the court. The proceedings altogether took scarcely more than half an hour. Laverick's solicitor first put Shepherd on the stand, who gave his account of Morrison's visit to the restaurant, spoke of his hurried exit and identified the knife which he had seen him snatch up. Cross-examined as to why he had kept silent, he explained that Mr. Morrison had been a good customer and he saw no reason why he should give unsolicited evidence which would cost a man his life. Directly, however, another man had been accused, the matter appeared to him to be altogether different. He had come forward the moment he had heard of Laverick's arrest, to offer his evidence.

While the opinion of the court was still undecided, Laverick's solicitor called Miss Zoe Leneveu. A little murmur of interest ran through the court. Laverick himself started. Zoe stepped into the witness box, looking exceedingly pale, and with a bandage over the upper part of her head. She admitted that she was the half-sister of Arthur Morrison, although there was no blood relationship. She described his sudden visit to her rooms on the night of the murder, and his state of great alarm. She declared that he had confessed to her on the previous afternoon that he had been guilty of the murder in question.

Her place in the witness box was taken by the Honorable David Bellamy. He declared that the prisoner was an old friend of his, and that the twenty thousand pounds of which he had been recently possessed had come from him for investment in Laverick's business. The circumstances, he admitted, were somewhat peculiar, and until negotiations had been concluded Mr. Laverick had doubtless felt uncertain how to make use of the money. But he assured the court that there was no person who had any claim to the sum of money in question save himself, and that he was perfectly

aware of the use to which Laverick had put it.

Laverick was discharged within a very few minutes, and a warrant was issued for the apprehension of Morrison. Laverick found Bellamy waiting for him, and was hurried into his motor.

"Well, you see," the latter exclaimed, "we kept our word! That dear, plucky little friend of yours turned the scale, but in any case I think that there would not have been much trouble about the matter. The magistrate had received a communication direct from the Home Secretary concerning your case."

"I am very grateful indeed," Laverick declared. "I tell you I think I am very lucky. I wish I knew what had become of Miss Leneveu. The usher told me she left the court before we came out."

"I asked her to go straight back to her rooms," Bellamy said. "You must excuse me for interfering, Laverick, but I found her almost in a state of collapse last night in Jermyn Street. I was having Morrison watched, and my man reported to me that he had left his rooms in a state of great excitement, and that a young lady was there who appeared to be seriously injured. I did everything I could. I sent her back to her house with a hospital nurse and someone to look after her. The wound wasn't serious, but the fellow must have been a brute indeed to have lifted his hand against such a child. I wonder whether he'll get away?"

"I should doubt it," Laverick remarked. "He hasn't the nerve. He'll probably get drunk and blow his brains out. He's a broken-spirited cur, after all."

"You'll have some lunch?" Bellamy asked.

Laverick shook his head. "If you don't mind, I'd like to go on and see Miss Leneveu."

"Put me down at the club, then, and take my car on, if you will."

Laverick walked up and down the pavement outside Zoe's little house for nearly half an hour. He had found the door closed and locked, and a neighbor

had informed him that Miss Leneveu had gone out in a cab with the nurse some time ago and had not returned. Laverick sent Bellamy's car back and waited. Presently a four-wheel cab came round the corner and stopped in front of her house. Laverick opened the door and helped Zoe out. She was as white as death, and the nurse who was with her was looking anxious.

"You are safe, then?" she murmured, holding out her hands.

"Quite," he answered. "You dear little girl!"

Zoe had fainted, however, and Laverick hurried out for the doctor. Curiously enough, it was the same man who only a week or so ago had come to see Arthur Morrison.

"She has had a bad scalp wound," he declared, "and her nervous system is very much run down. There is nothing serious. She seems to have just escaped concussion. The nurse had better stay with her for another day, at any rate."

"You are sure that it isn't serious?" Laverick asked eagerly.

"Not in the least," the doctor answered drily. "I see worse wounds every day of my life. I'll come again tomorrow, if you like, but it really isn't necessary with the nurse on the spot."

His natural pessimism was for a moment lightened by the fee which Laverick pressed upon him, and he departed with a few more encouraging words. Laverick stayed and talked for a short time with the nurse.

"She has gone off to sleep now, sir," the latter announced. "There isn't anything to worry about. She seems as though she had been having a hard time, though. There was scarcely a thing in the house but half a packet of tea—and these." She held up a packet of pawn tickets.

"I found these in a drawer when I came," she said. "I had to look round, because there was no money and nothing whatever in the house."

Laverick was suddenly conscious of an absurd mistiness before his eyes. "Poor little woman!" he murmured. "I think she'd sooner have starved than ask for help."

The nurse smiled. "I thought at first that she was rather a vain young lady," she remarked. "An empty larder and a pile of pawn tickets, and a new hat with a receipted bill for thirty shillings," she added, pointing to the sofa.

Laverick placed some notes in her hands. "Please keep these," he begged, "and see that she has everything she wants. I shall be here again later in the day. There is not the slightest need for all this. She will be quite well off for the rest of her life. Will you try and engage someone for a day or two to come in until she is able to be moved?"

"I'll look after her," the nurse promised.

Laverick went reluctantly away. The events of the last few days were becoming more and more like a dream to him. He went to his club almost from habit. Presently the excitement which all London seemed to be sharing drove his own personal feelings a little into the background. The air was full of rumors. The Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary were spoken of as one speaks of heroes. Nothing was definitely known, but there was a splendid feeling of confidence that for once in her history England was preparing to justify her existence as a great Power.

XXXIX

THE progress of the Czar from Buckingham Palace to the Mansion House, where he had, after all, consented to lunch with the Lord Mayor, witnessed a popular outburst of enthusiasm absolutely inexplicable to the general public. It was known that affairs in Central Europe were in a dangerously precarious state, and it was felt that the Czar's visit here, and the urgent summons which had brought his minister from St. Petersburg, were indications that the long-wished-for *entente* between Russia and England was now actually at hand. There was in the press a curious reticence with regard to the development of the political situation. One felt everywhere that it was the calm before the storm—that at any moment the great black headlines might tell of some start-

ling stroke of diplomacy, some dangerous peril averted or defied. The circumstances themselves of the Czar's visit had been a little peculiar. On his arrival it was announced that for reasons of health the original period of his stay, a week, was to be cut down to two days. No sooner had he arrived at Windsor, however, than a change was announced. The Czar had so far recovered as to be able even to extend the period at first fixed for his visit. Simultaneously with this the German and Austrian press were full of bitter and barely veiled articles, whose meaning was unmistakable. The Czar had thrown in his lot at first with Austria and Germany. That he was going deliberately to break away from that arrangement there seemed now scarcely any manner of doubt.

Bellamy and Louise, from a window in Fleet Street, watched him go by. Prince Rosmaran had been specially bidden to the luncheon, but he, too, had been with them earlier in the morning. Afterwards they turned their backs upon the city, and as soon as the crowd had thinned made their way to one of the West End restaurants.

"It seems too good to be true," declared Louise.

Bellamy nodded. "Nevertheless I am convinced that it is true. The humor of the whole thing is that it was our friends in Germany themselves who pressed the Czar not to cancel his visit altogether for fear of exciting suspicion. That, of course, was when there seemed to be no question of the news of the Vienna compact leaking out. They would never have dared to expose a man to such a trial as the Czar must have faced when the *résumé* of the Vienna proceedings, in the Chancellor's own handwriting, was read to him at Windsor."

"You saw the telegram from Paris?" Louise interposed. "The special mission from St. Petersburg has been recalled."

Bellamy smiled. "It all goes to prove what I say. Any morning you may expect to hear that Austria and Germany have received an ultimatum."

"I wonder," she remarked, "what became of Streuss?"

"He is hiding somewhere in London, without a doubt," Bellamy answered. "There's always plenty of work for spies."

"Don't use that word," she begged.

He made a little grimace. "You are thinking of my own connection with the profession, are you not?" he asked. "Well, that counts for nothing now. I hope I may still serve my country for many years, but it must be in a different way."

"What do you mean?" she demanded.

"I heard from my uncle's solicitors this morning," Bellamy continued, "that my uncle is very old and cannot live more than a few months. When he dies, of course, I must take my place in the House of Lords. It is his wish that I should not leave England again now, so I suppose there is nothing left for me but to give it up. I have done my share of traveling and work, after all," he concluded thoughtfully.

"Your share, indeed," she murmured. "Remember that but for that document which was read to the Czar at Windsor, Servia must have gone down, and England would have had to take a place among the second-class nations. There may be war now, it is true, but it will be a glorious war."

"Louise, very soon we shall know. Until then I will say nothing. But I do not want you altogether to forget that there has been something in my life dearer to me even than my career for these last few years."

Her blue eyes were suddenly soft. She looked across toward him wistfully.

"Dear," she whispered, "things will be altered with you now. I am not fit to be the wife of an English peer—I am not noble."

He laughed. "I am afraid," he assured her, "that I am democrat enough to think you one of the noblest women on earth. Why should I not? Your life itself has been a study in devotion. The modern virtues seem almost to ignore patriotism, yet the love of one's country is a splendid thing. But don't you think, Louise, that we have done our work—that it is time to think of ourselves?"

She gave him her hand. "Let us see," she said. "Let us wait for a little time and see what comes."

That night another proof of the popular feeling, absolutely spontaneous, broke out in one of the least expected places. Louise was encored for her wonderful solo in a modern opera of bellicose trend, and instead of repeating it she came alone on the stage after a few minutes' absence, dressed in Servian national dress. For a short time the costume was not recognized. Then the music, the national hymn of Servia and the recollection of her parentage brought the thing home to the audience. They did not even wait for her to finish. In the middle of her song the applause broke like a crash of thunder. From the packed gallery to the stalls they cheered her wildly, madly. A dozen times she came before the curtain. It seemed impossible that they would ever let her go. Directly she turned to leave the stage the uproar broke out again. The manager at last insisted that she should speak a few words. She stood in the center of the stage amid a silence as complete as the previous applause had been unanimous. Her voice reached easily to every place in the house.

"I thank you all very much," she said. "I am very happy indeed to be in London, because it is the capital city of the most generous country in the world—the country that is always ready to protect and help her weaker neighbors. I am a Servian, and I love my country, and therefore," she added, with a little break in her voice—"therefore I love you all."

It was past midnight before the audience was got rid of, and the streets of London had not been so impassable for years. Crowds made their way to the front of Buckingham Palace and on to the War Office, where men were working late. Everything seemed to denote that the spirit of the country was roused. The papers next morning made immense capital of the incident, and for the following twenty-four hours suspense throughout the country was almost at fever height. It was known that the Cabinet Council had been sitting for six

hours. It was known, too, that without the least commotion, with scarcely any movements of ships that could be called directly threatening, the greatest naval force which the world had ever known was assembling off Dover. The stock markets were wildly excited. Laverick, back again in his office, found that his return to his accustomed haunts occasioned scarcely any comment. More startling events were shaping themselves. His own remarkable adventure remained, curiously enough, almost undiscussed.

He left the office shortly before his usual time, notwithstanding the rush of business, and drove at once to the little house in Theobald Square. Zoe was lying on the sofa, still white, but eager to declare that the pain had gone and that she was no longer suffering.

"It is too absurd," she declared, smiling, "my having this nurse here. Really, there is nothing whatever the matter with me. I should have gone to the theater, but you see it is no use."

She passed him the letter which she had been reading, and which contained her somewhat curt dismissal. He laughed as he tore it into pieces.

"Are you so sorry, Zoe? Is the stage so wonderful a place that you could not bear to think of leaving it?"

"It is not that," she whispered. "You know that it is not that."

He smiled as he took her confidently into his arms.

"There is a much more arduous life in front of you, dear," he said. "You have to come and look after me for the rest of your days. A bachelor who marries as late in life as I do, you know, is a trying sort of person."

She shrank away a little. "You don't mean it," she murmured.

"You know very well that I mean it," he answered, kissing her. "I think you knew from the very first that sooner or later you were doomed to become my wife."

She sighed faintly and half closed her eyes. For the moment she had forgotten everything. She was absolutely and completely happy.

Later on he made her dress and come

out to dinner, and afterwards, as they sat talking, he laid an evening paper before her.

"Zoe," he declared, "the best thing that could have happened. You will not be foolish, dear, about it, I know. Remember the alternative—and read that."

She glanced at the few lines which announced the finding of Arthur Morrison in a house in Bloomsbury Square. The police had apparently tracked him down, and he had shot himself at the final moment. The details of his last few hours were indescribable. Zoe shuddered and her eyes filled with tears. She smiled bravely in his face, however.

"It is terrible," she whispered simply, "but, after all, he was no relation of mine, and he tried to do you a frightful injury. When I think of that, I find it hard even to be sorry."

There was indeed almost a pitiless look in her face as she folded up the paper, as though she felt something of that common instinct of her sex which transforms a gentle woman so quickly into a hard, merciless creature when the being whom she loves is threatened.

Laverick smiled. "Let us go out into the streets," he said, "and see what all this excitement is about."

They bought a late edition, and there it was at last in black and white. An ultimatum had been presented at Berlin and Vienna. Certain treaty rights which had been broken with regard to Austria's action in the East were insisted upon by Great Britain. It was demanded that Austria should cease the mobilization of her troops upon the Servian frontier and renounce all rights to a protectorate over that country, whose independence Great Britain felt called upon from that time forward to guarantee. It was further announced that England, France and Russia were acting in this matter in complete concert, and that the neutrality of Italy was assured. Further, it was known that the great English fleet had left for the North Sea with sealed orders.

Laverick took Zoe home early and called later at Bellamy's rooms. Bellamy greeted him heartily. He was on the point of going out, and the two men drove off together in the latter's car.

"See, my dear friend," Bellamy exclaimed, "what great things come from small means! The document which you preserved for us, and for which we had to fight so hard, has done all this."

"It is marvelous!" Laverick murmured.

"It is very simple," Bellamy declared. "That meeting in Vienna was meant to force our hands. It is all a question of the balance of strength. Germany and Austria together, with Russia friendly—even with Russia neutral—could have defied Europe. Germany could have spread out her army westward while Austria seized upon her prey. It was a splendid plot, and it was going very well until the Czar himself was suddenly confronted by our King and his ministers with a revelation of the whole affair. At Windsor the thing seemed different to him. The French government behaved splendidly, and the Czar behaved like a man. Germany and Austria are left *planté là*. If they fight, well, it will be no one-sided affair. They have no fleet, or rather they will have none in a fortnight's time. They have no means of landing an army here. Austria, perhaps, can hold Russia, but with a French army in better shape than it has been for years, and the English landing as many men as they care to with ease anywhere on the north coast of Germany, the entire scheme proved abortive. Come into the club and have a drink, Laverick. Today great things have happened to me."

"And to me," Laverick interposed.

"You can guess my news, perhaps," Bellamy said, as they seated themselves in easy chairs. "Mademoiselle Idiale has promised to be my wife."

Laverick held out his hand. "I congratulate you heartily!" he exclaimed. "I have been an engaged man myself for something like half an hour."

XL

"ONE thing, at least, these recent adventures should teach whoever may be responsible for the government of this country," Bellamy remarked to his wife,

as he laid down the morning paper. "For the first time in many years we have taken the aggressive against Powers of equal standing. We were always rather good at bullying smaller countries, but the bare idea of an ultimatum to Germany would have made our late Premier go light-headed."

"And yet it succeeded," Louise reminded him.

"Absolutely," he affirmed. "Today's news makes peace a certainty. If your country knew everything, Louise, they'd give us a royal welcome next month."

"You really mean that we are to go there, then?" she asked.

"It isn't exactly one of my privileges," he declared, "to fix upon the spot where we shall take our belated honeymoon, but I haven't been in Belgrade for years, and I know you'd like to see your people."

"It will be more happiness than I ever dreamed of," she murmured. "Do you think we shall be safe in passing through Vienna?"

Bellamy laughed. "Remember," he said, "that I am no longer David Bellamy, with a silver greyhound attached to my watch chain and an obnoxious reputation in foreign countries. I am Lord Denchester of Denchester, a harmless English peer traveling on his honeymoon. By the way, I hope you like the title."

"I shall love it when I get used to it," she declared. "To be an English countess is dazzling, but I do think that I ought not to go on singing at Covent Garden."

"Tomorrow will be your last night," he reminded her. "I have asked Laverick and the dear little girl he is going to marry to come with me. Afterwards we must all have supper together."

"How nice of you!" she exclaimed.

"I don't know about that," Bellamy said, smiling. "I really like Laverick. He is a decent fellow and a good sort. Incidentally, he was thundering useful to us, and pretty plucky about it. He interests me, too, in another way. He is a man who, face to face with a moral problem, acted exactly as I should have done myself!"

"You mean about the twenty thousand pounds?" she asked.

Bellamy assented. "He was practically dishonest," he pointed out. "He had no right to use that money and he ought to have taken the pocketbook to the police station. If he had done so—that is to say, if he had waited there for the police, if he had been seen to hold out that pocketbook, to have discussed it with anyone, it is ten to one that there would have been another tragedy that night. At any rate, the document would never have come to us."

She smiled. "My moral judgment is warped," she asserted, "from the fact that Laverick's decision brought us the document."

He nodded. "Perhaps so," he agreed, "and yet, there was the man face to face with ruin. The use of that money for a few hours did no one any harm, and saved him. I say that such a deed is always a matter of calculation, and in this case that he was justified."

"I wonder what he really thinks about it himself?" she remarked.

"Perhaps I'll ask him."

But when the time came, and he sat in the box with Laverick and Zoe, he forgot everything else in the joy of watching the woman whom he had loved so long. She moved about the stage that night as though her feet indeed fell upon the air. She appeared to be singing always with restraint, yet with some new power in her voice, a quality which even in her simpler notes left the great audience thrilled. Already there was a rumor that it was her last appearance. Her marriage to Bellamy had been that day announced in the *Morning Post*. When, in the last act, she sang alone on the stage the famous love song, it seemed to them all that, although her voice

trembled more than once, it was a new thing to which they listened. Zoe found herself clasping Laverick's hand in tremulous excitement. Bellamy sat like a statue, a little back in the box, his clean-cut face thrown into powerful relief by the shadows beyond. Yet as he listened his eyes, too, were marvelously soft.

The song grew and grew till with the last notes the whole story of an exquisite and expectant passion seemed trembling in her voice. The last note came from her lips almost as though unwillingly, and was prolonged for an extraordinary period. When it died away its passing seemed something almost unrealizable. It quivered away into a silence which lasted for many seconds before the gathering roar of applause swept the house. And in those last few seconds she had turned and faced Bellamy. Their eyes met, and the light which flashed from his seemed answered by the quivering of her throat. It was her good-bye. She was singing a new love song, singing her way into the life of the man whom she loved, singing her way into love itself. Once more the great house, packed to the ceiling, was worked up to a state of frenzied excitement. Bellamy was recognized, and the significance of her song sent a wave of sentiment through the house whose only possible form of expression took to itself shape in the frantic greetings which called her to the front again and again. But the three in the box were silent. Bellamy stood back in the shadows. Laverick and Zoe seemed suddenly to become immersed in themselves. Bellamy threw open the door of the box.

"At Luigi's in half an hour," said he softly. "You will excuse me for a few minutes? I am going to Louise."

THE END



WHEN we hear some men declare that they owe it to their wives for what they are, we are apt to wonder whether it is meant as a compliment or an apology.

LET GEORGE UNDO IT

By GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

IT was just fourteen years ago this month that a tall, lean, dark young Chicago newspaper reporter began to put the common folk of the American country on really intimate foot kissing terms with the great god Ha-Ha.

The little god Giggle and the little god Grin had been unveiled previously in the national temples by High Priests Field, Nye and Twain, but the big god Ha-Ha had lingered without a prophet. Believers there were in every corner of the land whose spirit was willing—for had not the high priests indicated the coming of a man who was to lead the people *en masse* into the Kingdom of Laughter? But, alas, for years all remained in darkness and the man came not.

And then one morning a little more than a decade and a half ago a train on the Wabash Railroad pulled out of the "deepo" in a fly speck on the map of the State of Indiana called Kentland. A week later the train arrived in Chicago. A year later it became noised about in the land that the hoped-for prophet had appeared at last, and the reading eyes of the people began to move westward. Another year and the Mississippi country flocked to the mosque in northern Illinois, carrying with it tributes of laughter; another year, and the Gulf and Coast tribes joined in the pilgrimage; another year and the East followed, its caravan headed by a million crusaders bearing aloft the legend: "Hail to Ha-Ha and Ha-Ha's Prophet!" "Fables In Slang" became the Koran of American humor, and the name of the evangelist, the name of Ade, became synonymous with "laugh."

The temples of amusement through-

out the country called to the prophet and he promulgated the religion of the idol Ha-Ha in many addresses. "The Sultan of Sulu," the first of these, won hundreds of reluctant thousands to the faith. "Peggy from Paris," "The County Chairman," "The Shogun," "The College Widow," "Just Out of College" and "Father and the Boys" successively brought further recalcitrants into the fold. "The Bad Samaritan," first injured to the Ade, was dismissed as a stone bruise and forgotten—and all America sang pæans and burned incense (and incidentally put lots of coin in the collection plate) for Ha-Ha and, more so, for its Indiana evangelist. For fourteen years, the evangelist has been possessed of all the honor in his own country; for fourteen years the name of Ade has been supreme in its own peculiar line. But now, curiously enough by his own hand, the evangelic prophet has seemingly hari-kari'd himself at Ha-Ha's jeweled toes, has robbed himself with open eyes of his great office, and has indicated, as did the high priests in turn before him, that a new leader is to come out of the same State of Indiana, that this new prophet is to take up the spreading of the doctrines of Ha-Haism and that the name of the prophet is Kin Hubbard, a simple newspaper shepherd of mid-Western fields. This is the story:

Several weeks ago there came to my desk from the outlands a letter carrying within it a transcript of "George Ade's newest fable in slang." I adjusted my cigar and read:

Once there was a so-called Colonel who was a Loud Noise in his own town of Springfield. He owned the Daily Paper and told all the Pol-

iticians when to head in and where to get off. After many years of Hustle he decided that he was entitled to a Good Rest. So he applied for a Government Job. His wife had taken a Travel Course in the Chautauqua and wanted to visit some Country far from Furnace Heat and Frozen Water Pipes. The Colonel wanted to put in a restful Vacation at the expense of the Government, so he landed an appointment as U. S. Minister to Caribay. This little Red Pepper Republic is away down in the Tropics. When it is not sleeping it is frothing at the mouth. The Colonel and the somewhat bewildered Partner of his Joys, together with a very attractive daughter named Kate, went sailing away to what they just knew would be an Earthly Paradise. They arrived at Caribay just as all the Patriots living in the Interior were getting ready to blow up the Dictator. One of the Local Aristocrats promptly fell in love with the Attractive Daughter. The inevitable Young American appeared on the Scene to promote the Insurrection, not because it was any of his business, but because Funston and T. R. and a few more have made it the Fashion. He overplayed his Hand and was caught with the Goods. The Local Aristocrat offered him a Pardon if he would agree to hurry away and never come back. The American Minister compelled him to Stick. The Insurgents stood off bombarding the City, but they failed to come rushing in and release the Prisoner. It looked as if the Boy would be stood up against the Wall in the good old Spanish Style. Problem: How could the American Minister turn the Government upside down and rescue the Young Fellow and at the same time remain absolutely Neutral?

Tacked on the end of the fable were these words: "In the language of the *Family Story Paper*, the continuation of this exciting narrative may be found in the latest comedy by George Ade, entitled 'UNITED STATES MINISTER BEDLOE,' in which Charles Frohman is presenting William H. Crane."

My curiosity was aroused. I looked up the route sheets and discovered that the play was being presented in—Philadelphia! I drank an extra large quantity of strong coffee and started on a pilgrimage to what I believed might be another of Ha-Ha's shrines. A perfect lady usher escorted me to a point of vantage in the immediate vicinity of the bass drum. My little tribute of critical praise was biting at the bit to be laid anew at Ha-Ha and Ha-Ha's prophet's pedestal. I glowed in eager anticipation. And then they pulled up the curtain.

The first act, laid in Springfield, where Bedloe accepts the post of minister to

Caribay, exercised itself placidly with a number of Yonkers *Statesman* species of *au gratin* "exchange" jokes, with moss-eared slang and with no attempt at the sort of character delineation hitherto associated with the name of Ade. The solitary moment of real fun, at the tag end of the act, was due alone to the comic poses of Mr. Crane in a farewell speech to his fellow townsmen who were serenading him beneath the window. "But," thought I, "wait until Ade gets his characters to Caribay in the next act!" I waited—in vain. Acts II and III, poor revampings of the old Richard Harding Davis "Dictator" idea with a little of O. Henry thrown in here and there, ate into the hours like two fat hookworms. The prophet of Ha-Ha was stranded in Caribay as he had been in Springfield. One good line was separated from another good line by miles of "just talk." The same old swarthy, red-trousered Miguels and Morenos and Escobars mixed up the same old always unruffled Yankee in the same old South American revolutionary way. It was as much like all the other previous things of its kind as musical shows by Pixley and Luders. Once in a while the audience laughed. It is only fair to the play to chronicle this fact because I did not. Poor jests about Uncle Joe Cannon, Harvard and other undemocratic institutions were made to take the place of situations, and it seemed perfectly plain that the old Ade originality must have gone around to the Walton bar for a drink.

Then came the fourth act. Suddenly the audience was brought out of its curled-up reverie by Bedloe. "Mother," said he to his wife, "here's a book that came down from the States. It's called 'Abe Martin.' Listen to some of the funny things in it." Whereupon, Bedloe, interrupting the progress of the play, began to read from the volume. "Henry Walters went out to the poorhouse in his new touring car today to call on his mother," read Bedloe—and the audience, including your humble reviewer, sat up and began to take notice. Bedloe, apparently forgetting all about the fact that he was a character in a

George Ade play, read on and on from the book, and out in front we all laughed until our tummies hurt. When Bedloe stopped and laid the book aside to go on with the play the audience applauded him, begging him to stick to "Abe Martin" and let the play go hang. But contracts with playwrights are contracts. An actor cannot always gratify an audience's desires. When the applause subsided, Bedloe's wife, in the lines of the play, asked him: "Who wrote that book, Jackson?" "Kin Hubbard," replied Bedloe. And the audience applauded the name, welcoming the newborn apostle of Ha-Ha into the temple. George Ade had challenged the comparison himself, and it had returned to smite him.

After the play Mr. Crane asked me how I had liked it. (You may now understand why a reviewer loses his friends rapidly.) "But," protested Mr. Crane, "if the critics would only take the play as a political satire, which it is!" "Ah," I returned Weber-Fields fashion, "you may know it's a satire and I may know it—but does the dog know it?" Assuredly the dog upon which "UNITED STATES MINISTER BEDLOE" has thus far been tried out has *not* known it. As it stands, the play is, in the author's own words, neutral. Before going further with it, let Mr. Ade undo the wrong he has committed against himself; let him challenge the threatening prophet of Ha-Ha anew; let him accentuate his types; let him *show* us the funny phases of a South American revolution instead of having his characters merely talk about them; let him insert two or three situations and at least two or three bits of his erstwhile wit—or, better still, let him write an entirely new play. There may yet be time—but his followers are wavering, are breaking ranks, are flocking to the new evangelist from Indiana. The sky is black; the lightning flashes; but Ha-Ha is here to remain! The question echoes to the Pacific: Is Ade? The play in point has been loaned a good performance by Mr. Crane and his capable support and has been aptly staged by John Emerson.

A large portion of small souls who do
May, 1911—11

not know whether an iambic pentameter is a machine to tell you how many miles you go on your bicycle or a technical term employed by botanists to describe a certain species of Madagascan wild crocus, have been much occupied ever since Walter Browne's intermittent blank verse play "EVERYWOMAN" was produced at the Herald Square Theater by Henry W. Savage. On all sides you hear their alarming concern: "Faulty meter" — "Limping lines" — "Amateurish attempt at poetry," and all that sort of thing. There is nothing so easy to criticize as verse, particularly blank verse. All one has to do to make an impression is to say it is bad. The moment anyone writes a blank verse play, a lot of otherwise good people run for their bean shooters. It has grown to become a custom, like marriage and wearing pants. While, in all conscience, it must be admitted that in the specific case of "EVERYWOMAN," described as a modern morality play, the verse when employed is blank, yet surely enough it is to this very weakness that the presentation's popular appeal is and will be due. The theater attending public, in sad actuality, prefers in matters literary the slant of "literature" mailed out by business houses. And the public, Mr. Browne nicely remembered, is—the public!

"EVERYWOMAN," from first to last, poetry or no poetry, is a presentation replete with interest. It is, in brief characterization, the old morality play "Everyman" Julian Mitchelled. We see Everywoman, presumably symbolic of the Average Lady, in her "pilgrimage in quest of Love," although in view of the very familiar scenic investiture my friend the Chronic Faultfinder suggests the programme line should read "in quest of 'The Love Cure.'" With Youth, Beauty and Modesty, Everywoman goes out into the world. In the theater, whither first she goes, Modesty deserts her when she mistakes Passion for Love. At the gay midnight feast Beauty dies and Everywoman, despairing, takes up with Wealth. New Year's Eve finds her on thick Broadway, deserted by Wealth and Youth. In her crisis Truth

appears and leads Everywoman back home, where she finds Love awaiting her. Everywoman has sunk low in the gutter of the world, but Love, before whom she kneels, takes her by the hand. For Love lifts up Everywoman. Admirably staged by George Marion, the spectacle never falters, and carries one with it to its really exhilarating close. The fourth act scene, showing the Great White Way at the stroke of the newborn year, with its crazy, yelling mob, is sufficiently intoxicating in its realism to make one feel like opening a quart. Miss Laura Nelson Hall essays the leading portrayal, a typical "Leslie Carter role." But Miss Hall is neither fish, flesh, fowl nor good red hair. The best performance is credited to H. Cooper Cliffe in the chorus role of Nobody.

Speaking of New Year's Eve: Ring out the New, ring in the Old! The New Theater has had to throw up the sponge in favor of the "old theater." It will leave the recesses of Central Park, will come downtown, will house what is left of its principles in a small play place and will attempt to amalgamate Art and Commercialism. Not unlike the late lamented Café de l'Opéra, the New Theater has discovered that a beautiful building, fine paintings, pretentious orchestras and "dress suits" will not swell the cash register if the bacon is missing from the club sandwich and the service is bad. Even "society people" have some sense. No writer regrets more than I the failure of an institution that originally held out as much hope as did this endowed playhouse; no dramatic commentator regrets more than I the crass blindness that was privileged to interfere with and to abrogate the institution's splendid promise. The New Theater has failed for five leading reasons. May it realize them well before it starts in its second-winded career. It has failed:

I. Because, since that night of its first dress rehearsal, when such men as Augustus Thomas were made to sit in the top balcony while the lower floor was given up to young pink and white, cuff-kierchief, dancing class Clarences, the New Theater has maintained a blad-

dered air of snobbery, discouraging brains and sympathy in favor of diamond waistcoat buttons and an Upper East Side address.

II. Because it has posed a basic principle and consequent reason-to-be, and while constantly violating that principle has yet persistently maintained that it had set itself no definite standard of craft.

III. Because it has been Anglomanic in its every posturing, and has sat on a soft cushion and looked wise when it should have been talking to American dramatists and making an effort to get their possibly worthy wares. If, because of private "subscription nights," the New Theater cannot encourage American dramatists to write for its stage with promise of fair reward, then either subscription nights or the New Theater—or both, as has been established—should go. Every night will be a *public* subscription night when the play is a good one.

IV. Because, with the exception of Mr. Hamilton Bell, the art director, and Mr. George Foster Platt, the stage producer, there has been a sad absence of ability, experience and judgment in the directing room.

V. Because, from first to last, from the architects to the head ushers, the all-necessary, without-which-nothing "dramatic instinct" was an absent quantity.

On its deathbed, apparently repenting its expatriated dramatic attitude when life was young within it, the New Theater sought to appease its critics by becoming "American" with a vengeance and producing Mary Austin's play of Indian life, "THE ARROW MAKER." Had such dramas been presented in the beginning, a different story might have been written. For, although the work in point possessed no startling intrinsic qualities, it resolved itself, in proscenium display, into a moving, interesting, compelling series of pictures detailing the romance of the primitive red man. No more gorgeous scenic pictures than those disclosed in this drama have been viewed on our stage. The first scene, showing the valley of Sagharawite with its gigantic cliffs purple in the twilight and its brush-choked trail leading down into

the deep ravine, was more dramatic in itself than some whole plays. And the second scene, throwing before the eye the broad stretch of sunbaked plain beyond the Indian camp, and the third scene, the top of Toorape, with its view of the long, silver stream-coiled valley and distant snow-topped mountains, were scarcely less so.

Augustus Thomas's three latest dramas, produced by the Messrs. Shubert, are called "AS A MAN THINKS." Under this one title are grouped three distinct themes, any one of which would be enormously ample unto itself for an evening's dramatic exploitation and elucidation. The subjects are the Jew question, the equal sex rights question and the mental healing question. Mr. Thomas has poured out his ink valiantly and undismayed, however, and although he has been unable to settle any of the issues convincingly—if, indeed, such was his intention—he nevertheless has succeeded in building a drama of profound interest, of unremittingly superb craftsmanship and of indisputable power. The *modus operandi* of the playwright has been the constructing of dramatic situations on the premises of each of the propositions instead of permitting the situations to create themselves out of a demonstration of the premises in harness. A dovetailing of the antecedent propositions is employed to bring the characters into quasi-related action. In other words, the dramatic jugglery is analyzed at the final curtain to have been done with Q-is-to-be-D's rather than Q-was-to-be-D's.

To sense the manner we need but divide the characters into their distinct groupings. Doctor Seelig's daughter Vedah is in love with Julian Burrill, a sculptor. Seelig disapproves of Vedah's marrying out of her race. Vedah gives father the slip, runs around the corner and comes back with a blush and a wedding ring. Father, urged by erstwhile hostile mother, forgives. Jew problem—flop! Frank Clayton, a wealthy unsynagogued publisher, has fooled the hotel clerks in Atlantic City and Paris on several occasions by having baggage with him. His wife learns of his in-

fidelity, says she doesn't see why she can't if he can, and rushes to a bachelor friend's apartment in a spirit of revenge. Although Mrs. Clayton is innocent of wrongdoing, when Clayton hears of her act he insists he believes that she did not spend all of her time in De Lota's rooms looking at the pictures and brings divorce proceedings. Their little boy is finally instrumental in reconciling them to each other. Sex rights problem—flop! Clayton wants to kill De Lota, the supposed seducer of his wife. His grievance is so deep that it has broken him down mentally and physically. Doctor Seelig tells Clayton that if he will relax his mind he will cure himself. We all know, of course, that fundamentally this idea contains many elements of truth, but see how it is worked out by Mr. Thomas! Clayton "relaxes," at the doctor's urging, for exactly ten minutes. Then he is brought face to face with De Lota. Clayton flames forth afresh, wild to get at his enemy. De Lota produces proof that Clayton has been mistaken in his suspicions. "You seel!" exclaims Doctor Seelig triumphantly. Mental healing problem—also flop!

When one goes to the theater, however, one usually leaves analysis home in the cocktail shaker. We care less for reason and logical deduction than for action and excitement. In my mind's eye, I have always seen a play in which, at the very start, the two leading characters, for no reason whatever, would place revolvers in their pockets, never to show them—much less use them—again. I am quite sure such an action would arouse my interest and "excite" me and make me curious, and I believe I am fair in presuming that it would have the same effect on persons who do not have to go to the theater every night in the week. It would not matter that there was no logic or reason back of the pistol display; it would suffice that it was "exciting." Mr. Thomas, in a way, makes use of such pistol tricks of dramaturgy. He shows you a problem at the outset, arouses your interest and then puts the problem away in his pocket never to bring it out again. But the trick works—almost every time. And

that is the reason one would have to look a long way for a more enthralling drama than "AS A MAN THINKS."

Not since "Mid-Channel" was produced by Charles Frohman has a play been better acted. And I do not except either "The Concert" or "The Thunderbolt."

Were I an actress, I know that I, too, should just worship one of those roles where all the other characters were called upon to throw roses at me whenever I came out upon the scene, bow before me throughout the action of the play and proclaim loudly every six minutes that when it came to a question of beauty Venus finished a bad second. Realizing my own possible weakness in this regard, I cannot hold it against Miss Constance Collier that she fairly eats up the role of Thais in Paul Wiltach's drama of that name founded on Anatole France's romance, whence was similarly derived Massenet's well known opera. Miss Collier, undressed in something modistes might call a "gown," leans, languishes, glides, undulates and revels in passionate posturings on "the marble terrace before Thais's palace overlooking the city of Alexandria and the Mediterranean" and in the "Temple of Love in Thais's garden by moonlight," while fifty Athenians, Egyptians and Nubian slaves are kept busy informing the audience in the Criterion Theater that the sun and moon and stars may have to go out of business pretty soon unless Thais will consent to refrain from outdazzling them with the tremendous brilliance of her pulchritude.

Of course this sort of thing is all very well in its way, and I presume a considerable portion of the audience is duly impressed, but personally, in viewing interpretations of the Thais brand of roles, I must confess to a desire to see the wondrous beauty for myself instead of having the actors tell me about it. A drama such as "THAIS," that must either stand or fall by the physical attractiveness of its leading interpreter, loses its force in vast measure when its central character fails to reveal the uncommon or Garden variety of body and facial appeal. Art, for once at least,

becomes subservient to physical magnetism in this case. We must see and feel in the theater of today—it does not suffice us that we merely hear. The vitality and potency of any number of comparatively recent dramas that might otherwise have been forceful have been diminished in great proportion by virtue of this enormous error in casting. "This Woman and This Man" and "The Foolish Virgin," to name but two, might have met with a more benevolent fate had their respective Thekla Mullers and Diane de Charances been invested with the necessary and incontrovertible sympathy of youth and prettiness. "Kassa," too, might thus have courted and won the greater favor of the stalls, as might have "Mary Magdalene" and a dozen others. It may be sad that it is so, but so it is. Type has become of scarehead importance in the theater. Belasco and Brady, cognizant, are building success upon success by obeying the call, while other producers, knowing but not heeding, are becoming stockholders in the storehouses. A role requiring beauty must *have* beauty; a role calling for youth must *have* youth or at least what will pass for youth; a role like Thais *must* have a Mary Garden. As produced by Joseph Gaites, "THAIS" discloses much nice scenery, much good lighting and much care in stagecraft generally. But in this "THAIS," drama, music, the golden horseshoe and Mary Garden are lacking. It is too bad, for the effort to do the right thing was so sincere and in itself so praiseworthy.

THE CONFESSION

(J. Halleck Reid)

A murder. Murderer confesses to priest. Priest's brother arrested for crime. Priest must keep silent. Terrible suspense. Murderer dying of consumption tells the truth. Thank God! Curtain.

THE HAPPIEST NIGHT OF HIS LIFE

(McCree and Rosenfeld)

The second worst music show of the season.

JUMPING JUPITER

(Carle and Rosenfeld)

The worst.

NOVELS—THE SPRING CROP

By H. L. MENCKEN

ON the first page of "THE BROAD HIGHWAY," by Jeffery Farnol (*Little-Brown*, \$1.35), we discover that young Sir Peter Vibart must wed the Lady Sophia Sefton within one calendar year or lose the fortune of five hundred thousand pounds left by that unpleasant old cannibal, his late uncle. Of course Sir Peter objects most stubbornly; of course he is inveigled by fate into Lady Sophia's presence; of course he falls madly in love with her, and of course he marries her and annexes the cash.

It is soothing to see this good old plot on its legs again. It was a favorite during the middle Victorian period, and did valiant service not only in prose fiction, but also on the stage. Toward the beginning of the present century, however, it fell into discredit and was heaved into the literary hellbox along with the lost will plot, the stern father plot and the plot of the changelings. Let Mr. Farnol be given praise for rescuing and resuscitating it. He has adorned it in the process with new gauds. He has hung upon it a fabric of astounding incident and brilliant speech. He has written, in brief, a picaresque romance of the first quality, and there is small doubt that it will have as great a success in this fair land of ours as it has already enjoyed in England.

The taste for romance, like the taste for impropriety, is inborn in all normal human beings. Some of us, in the pride of our hearts, try to convince ourselves that we have outgrown it, that daredevil adventure can no longer thrill us, that affecting love making can no longer dim our eyes—but all in vain. The day comes when we turn inevitably from

Zola to Dumas, just as the day comes when we turn from Richard Strauss to Johann and from "John Gabriel Borkman" to "Sweet Lavender." The only difference between man and man is that one pursues the unreal incessantly, while the other chases it only in moments of weakness. Examine, for example, the vaudeville audience. It is made up in part of persons who find joy in vaudeville day in and day out, and in part of persons who like it only when they are sick, miserable, overworked or drunk. Vaudeville is romantic—and no man ever quite rids himself of romance. His head may rule his heart for a week, a month or a year—but on some fatal day or other that head of his will succumb to sorrow, weariness, alcohol, an unbalanced ration, the coo of a baby or the perfume of a woman's hair, and that heart of his will go upon a debauch straightway.

The most level-headed man is probably benefited by such a spree now and then, and fortunately enough, it is always possible to have it at will. If the natural impulse fails alcohol will do the work very well. I made the discovery years ago that three drinks of rye whiskey would double the pleasure to be got out of "Il Trovatore." Try it yourself. And if "Il Trovatore" is not the bill, try it on "Faust" or "Traviata" or any other such maudlin stuff—or on the plays of Charles Klein or the novels of George Barr McCutcheon or the conversation of your wife. But don't try it on "Das Rheingold" or Beethoven's Ninth Symphony or the dramas of August Strindberg or the novels of Henry James! To enjoy such things you must have your wits about you—which is precisely

what you must *not* have about you to enjoy romance. Vaudeville, to a man who is both intelligent and sober, is anguish unspeakable. But vaudeville, to a man who lacks either intelligence or sobriety, permanently or for the moment, is often extremely agreeable. And the same rule covers romantic fiction as well, not to mention the prattle of children, parlor melodrama, politics, homiletics and the (normally) depressing business of making love to a woman.

Curiously enough, the ancient mummy which serves as a plot in "The Broad Highway" is also brought back to life in "THE BOLTED DOOR," by George Gibbs (*Appleton*, \$1.50). In the noon-day of good Queen Victoria the name of the hero was always George and that of the heroine Amelia. Mr. Gibbs, with daring originality, has changed these appellations to Brooke and Natalie. He has also made several other improvements, which fact proves that he is no common manufacturer of best sellers. No doubt his story (which is written very plausibly, by the way) will win a *succès de department store*, and he will be encouraged to continue his adventures in literary paleontology. N. B. The house wherein it all happens is called the Grange. Another sweet memory of the good old Seaside Library!

Three novels which stand above the common level are "DENRY THE AUDACIOUS," by Arnold Bennett (*Dutton* \$1.50), "THE PRODIGAL JUDGE," by Vaughan Kester (*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.50), and "THE ADVENTURES OF A MODEST MAN," by Robert W. Chambers (*Appleton*, \$1.50). The Chambers book is a rambling affair, a string of short stories rather than a novel, but it shows humor, vivacity and no little art, and it will serve very well to mitigate the horrors of an American Sunday. Mr. Chambers knows how to write; the trouble with him is that he seldom seems to try. But with "THE ADVENTURES OF A MODEST MAN" in hand, let us forgive him for "Ailsa Paige." Mr. Bennett's story is another humorous chronicle. The scene is his beloved Five Towns, and the hero is a proletarian who brazens his way to riches and eminence. It is certainly not

very profound, but let no one deny that it is genuinely amusing. "THE PRODIGAL JUDGE" has humor, too, but in the main it is a serious study of that fantastic barbarism which passed for civilization in the slave States of the West in Jackson's day. In more than one place the author shows his debt to "Huckleberry Finn." The art of letters would be in better health in these fair United States if more of our native authors followed that incomparable model—or rather, if more of them showed Mr. Kester's *ability* to follow it. His book is carefully and honestly done; it is worthy of high praise.

In "A SINNER OF ISRAEL," by Pierre Costello (*Lane*, \$1.50), we follow through some four hundred pages of fine print the story of Ephraim, Baron Solvano, the wealthy Jewish pietist and philanthropist, and of young David Solvano, the son who is not his son. It is not until long after David has married Hannah Woolf, a pretty Jewess, and fallen in love with Candace Leonard, a pretty Christian, that he finds that he is really not a Solvano, nor even a Jew. His mother, it appears, erred. She was Christian born and out of sympathy with Lord Solvano's religious practices, and so she fell an easy victim to the dashing Ignaz Quesada, man of mystery. Let us now skip about two hundred or so pages. Quesada, it appears, is really the exiled king of Istria, one of those fantastic little Zendas which the modern art of prose fiction has tucked into every nook and corner of Europe. One day he wallops Prince Archelaus, seizes the throne and sends for David, whom he soon openly acknowledges as his son and heir. Miss Leonard conveniently dying, David then sends for Hannah his deserted wife, and so Istria glories in a Jewish crown princess. The Istrians, it appears, are not anti-Semites. It also appears that the author of this tale is not a Zangwill. But he does his best.

"THE JUSTICE OF THE KING," by Hamilton Drummond (*Macmillan*, \$1.20), carries us to the France of Louis XI. Louis is a suspicious, crafty, subterranean fellow, who gets much gloomy entertainment out of the notion that his

enemies plan to hack off his head and put the young Dauphin on the throne. So he sends young Stephen La Mothe to Amboise, where the Dauphin is living, to spy around. Stephen's spying quickly convinces him that such a plot is being hatched, and that the beautiful Ursula de Vesc is at the bottom of it, but just as quickly he falls in love with the said Ursula and cannot find it in his heart to slay her. So here appear the makings of a dashing story—with a happy ending, you may be sure. "Who giveth this woman to this man?" demands the good Father John. "I do," says Louis XI. Seven years later Stephen is Constable of France.

The scene of "COMPENSATION," by Anne Warwick (*Lane*, \$1.50), is the Washington of the Roosevelt administration, and we are introduced more than once into the presence of the Colonel himself. But the tale is really far more amatory than political. The Hon. Anthony Steele, Senator from Ohio, has been married to Mrs. Juliet Steele for twelve years when he meets Kathleen Warrens, the debutante daughter of Major Warrens. The Senator and his wife are on excellent terms, but it is seldom indeed that they sit in the twilight holding hands. So the Senator is ripe for Kathleen's charms, and it is not long before we behold the two in a surreptitious embrace. Then Juliet is thrown from her horse in Rock Creek Park and dies of a "severely crushed" spinal cord, and the reasonable expectation is that the Senator and Kathleen will wed. But not so. The Senator has discovered that his dead wife loved him, and that love of hers, now a ghost, urges him to celibacy. Kathleen in the end becomes the wife of another fellow. As for the Senator, he becomes Secretary of State and plods on toward dismal greatness. A long and in places rather trying tale.

The novelization of plays continues, with Arthur Hornblow leading the charge of novelizers. The latest product of his art is an irritating version of Eugene Walter's fine play, "THE EASIEST WAY" (*Dillingham*, \$1.50). It is a pity that Mr. Walter has such small respect for the work of his hand that he permits

it to be bedizened and degraded in this absurd fashion. Among all the native dramatists now writing for our stage there is none who exceeds him in accuracy of observation and vigor of thought. "THE EASIEST WAY" is the best play he has yet given us. It has been called, indeed, the best play ever written by an American. We should have it in book form, to study at leisure, as we have the plays of every first-class dramatist of Europe. But to encounter it in the hideous shape of a bad novel, with Mr. Walter's fine dialogue drowned in Mr. Hornblow's singularly puerile balderdash, can only give pain to every sincere admirer of the author.

To the multitude of books about "Robert Lewis Balfour Stevenson, known as Robert Louis Stevenson, advocate at the Scots bar," we must now add "WITH STEVENSON IN SAMOA" by H. J. Moors (*Small-Maynard*, \$1.50). When Stevenson sailed into Apia harbor in December, 1889, upon the little schooner *Equator*, Mr. Moors was the first resident of the town to greet him, and they remained fast friends until the novelist's death, five years afterwards. Moors was, and is today, the principal trader of Apia, and it was beneath his hospitable roof that Stevenson, Mrs. Stevenson and Lloyd Osbourne tarried until "Vailima" was reared upon the palm-covered heights of Vaea. Moors, in fact, supplied the money which paid for that famous aerie, lending \$12,000 without security and getting back every cent of it. While it was going up, and later on, in its gigantic hall, he and Tusitala swapped yarns of the coral isles, intrigued against the British and German overlords of Samoa and pulled wires for the deposed King Mataafa. In the present volume Stevenson's political activities are described in detail, and many of the manifestoes, proclamations and other noisy documents in which he had a hand are printed in full. Of greater interest to the lover of his books are the glimpses which Mr. Moors gives of his daily life. We learn that he went barefooted on all possible occasions, that he habitually wore a yachting cap worth twenty-five cents, that he

could not abide a stiff collar, that his favorite dish was soup, that he swore fluently and extensively, that "Vailima" cost \$12,000, that its annual upkeep cost \$6,500, that he wasted \$1,000 upon a brick chimney, useless in the tropics, that he was a hopeless failure as a planter, that slashing book reviews brought him to the verge of tears, that he was the slave of his women folk, that he believed in ghosts, that he used a Caligraph typewriter, that he possessed when he died, besides his books and furniture, his valuable copyrights and "Vailima," a personal estate worth exactly \$77,625. It is, in brief, an extremely intimate glimpse of a great literary artist that we get in this modest memoir and in consequence it is well worth reading.

The wine of Chestertonian wit begins to lose its headiness and flavor, as all wine must when the seller makes endeavor, with the aid of rain water, to turn a bottle into a butt. Mr. Chesterton started out in life with a set of striking, if invalid, ideas. They were ideas such as no other sane man had publicly maintained, or perhaps even secretly harbored, since the days of Nicholas Chryffs of Kues. Because they had been dead so long, they seemed newborn. Because they were so astoundingly unsound, they carried the queer, emotional conviction of revelations. So the world heard them avidly and called for more. But, alas for Chesterton, he had no more to offer! His whole stock was exhausted before he was halfway through his second book—but he kept on and on and on. He is still printing books today, at intervals of six months—like some faded charmer who continues to smirk at us across the footlights, and rattle her dry bones, and expose her lean calves to the ribaldry of the baldheads, long after her beauty is dead. Not that the Fat Mullah's latest volume, "ALARMS AND DISCURSIONS" (*Dodd-Mead, \$1.50*) is entirely without savor. Even bad wine, shamelessly diluted, is better than water from the rain spout. Even a faded charmer, long shorn of teeth, eyebrows and hips, may yet wring the willing tear as Marguerite Gautier. But

out of Chesterton the old shock of pleasant surprise, the old sting of devilish and delightful heresy, has gone. He needs a holiday, a chance to catch his breath, a rest in some philosophical sanitarium, a course of intellectual wet nursing. Let him put aside his pen for a year or so and renew his stock of ideas—preferably in the moldy tomes of the Thomists, the Scotists and the Ockhamites, where he seems to have got the shopworn stock that he is now trying to sell for the fourteenth time.

Unless my spies bring me false news, Adrian Hoffman Joline is a millionaire—or at any rate he is rich enough to dedicate a distinct and separate pair of galluses to every pair of small clothes in his wardrobe. But for all that opulence, there is the soul of a true booklover in him, and his random essays upon forgotten and half-forgotten makers of books, gathered now and then into stately volumes, are always full of charm. His latest collection, "EDGEHILL ESSAYS" (*Badger, \$2.00*), contains excellent papers upon Mark Akenside and Francis Jeffrey, the one a poet dead to the world for a hundred years and the other a critic whose fame was long since eclipsed by the greater fame of less earnest but more brilliant men. Added to these papers are two pleasant chapters upon autograph hunting, a vice to which Mr. Joline clings unblushingly, and a number of miscellaneous essays. A book to read at the tranquil end of a busy day. A soothing and amusing volume.

DID YOUR CHILD SAY THIS?—

by G. H. Preble.

(*Luce, 50 cents.*)

A book of abounding interest to young mothers and ancient grand-dads. There are numerous blank pages for inscribing the clever wheezes and epigrams of your own progeny.

GREAT CITIES IN AMERICA—

by Delos F. Wilcox, Ph. D.

(*Macmillan, \$1.25*)

A comprehensive study of municipal administration in Washington, New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, St. Louis and Boston, by a distinguished authority.

SHOPPING FOR THE SMART SET

By MARION C. TAYLOR

THE SMART SET SHOPPING DEPARTMENT will be glad to offer suggestions or answer questions regarding shopping and the New York shops. Readers of the SMART SET inquiring for names of shops where articles described are purchasable should inclose a stamp for reply, and state page and month. Address: "EDITOR, SMART SET SHOPPING DEPARTMENT."

THE most talked-of feminine fancy of the spring has been the *jupe-culotte* or trouser skirt, the season's sensation. When I first heard of the idea it seemed so frankly sensational and vulgar that I gave no further thought to it, but the newspapers and magazines have given it so much space that it seems to demand a few words of explanation.

There are two classes of trouser skirts—those that are frankly trousers, of the Turkish variety, and those that more nearly resemble a divided skirt and usually have a panel or some similar covering which hides their distinguishing feature. The latter are shown by Doucet, Worth and some of the most conservative houses abroad, and the former by Poiret and other extremists.

I do not believe that either of them has the least chance in the world to succeed. The first are too sensational ever to be worn by refined people, and those of the second class seem to me ugly. It is said in praise of them that they are so comfortable, so much more sensible than the tight skirts of the present fashion. It may be; I can't say. But what of it? Whenever did woman take to a fashion because it was comfortable? I'm afraid the *jupe-culotte* will have to put forth other claims before feminine fancy will take it up seriously. It is, besides, a most difficult fashion to wear successfully, and Mme. Paquin, whose authority in the world of fashion is unquestioned today, absolutely refuses to have any-

thing to do with it. The whole idea seems to me but one more freakish outcome of the never ending quest for something new, and I feel certain it will go the way of its predecessor the sheath skirt, which was never accepted in its original form.

Speaking of the sheath skirt reminds me of a distinguishing feature of many of the afternoon and evening gowns. The side of the skirt is cut open or looped up to display lace flounces, or possibly embroidered chiffon, which is sheer enough to show the ankle through the transparency. A Paquin model has an underskirt cut short showing the foot on one side. It has also one of the very newest trains, which are of lace, starting from one side under the arm, looping at the bottom, turning up and ending at the waist line in back; they are intended to be carried over the arm. I saw a Dre-coll frock of beaded mousseline de soie which had this train of white satin souplesse. Over it the model wore a soft rose chiffon wrap and had a single rose stuck in the girdle.

One of the most important features of the spring models is the buttons, which are more noticeable than they have been for some seasons. They are so treated that they are a distinct trimming, often giving the only brilliant color tone to the costume. Sometimes a plain white pearl button is heavily stitched on with black, and the reverse is the case with large black bone buttons; but more notice-

able are the fancy buttons—striped, dotted—anything at all in the way of ornamentation. So rummage through the button box and unearth all the old curiosities the house affords in the button line; this is the season for them.

One of Paquin's most successful suits, shown me the other day, was in linen of a beautiful warm fuchsia shade, a new color this season and a favorite of this house. The skirt, which was carried up into one of the new high girdles pointed at the left side under the bust, had a band of wool-embroidered flowers, looking for all the world like sampler work, a little above the bottom. The colors were, to say the least, startling if one picked them to pieces, as there was a distinct cerise, a magenta, a purple, a blue green and a white, but the effect was merely smart and unusual and the stiff flat roses were quite old-fashioned and prim. The coat which accompanied this was a short-waisted Eton, with a narrow patent leather belt fastening it a little below the bust, and below this was a tiny skirt to the coat. A very fine plain hemstitched mousseline collar and cuffs added to it, and a very smart mousseline blouse piped with red and trimmed with tiny red buttons gave the needed finish. But just as smart as the wool embroidery were the striped (they looked to me like barber pole stripes) buttons about a half-inch in diameter which were used plentifully at the back of the skirt and to trim the coat. These buttons were in the tricolors and were another indication of the Revolutionary tendencies of the spring fashions. Striped surahs are vying for favor with soft-shaded taffetas fichu-trimmed.

The revival of surah is quite interesting. Some houses call it silk serge, but it is in reality a surah. It has come back in a far heavier weave, but retains the suppleness demanded of all fabrics today. They say it is hard to tailor, but one sees adorable little fancy suits of it on every hand.

As to colors, for house and evening wear, they grow more beautifully brilliant each day, and for street one cannot but remark the predominance of blacks and blues. Of course spring and sum-

mer will bring lighter colors later on, but smart women never go back on those two favorites.

So many spring evening frocks consist of an underskirt of white with an overdrapery of brilliant color, the most popular being fuchsia, coral, American Beauty, greens, empire and parrot, orange and vivid canary yellow, and finally purple, which is very smart over white. This idea brightens a frock and yet lends distinction. Paquin is showing soft-shaded taffeta evening frocks, which are very quaint but need careful handling and a certain type of woman to show them to advantage.

But the taffeta walking frocks in their 1830 styles are most charming and promise to be popular. They are made with simple skirts puffed or shirred at the bottom and heavily weighted to hang close to the figure. One model had a huge very flat chiffon rose at either side of the skirt above the narrow puffing at the bottom. The material of the frock was a taffeta souplesse of gray shot with rose and an odd fichu ended at either side of the waistline in front where the rose color girdle passed through it. Jeanne Lanvin is the chief exponent of these frocks, and with them she sends adorable hats like inverted peck measures. If they suit your style by all means have one of these quaint frocks, but if they don't, beware.

Another point many of the new frocks show is a real apron tablier in front—so real that an unenlightened man who strayed or was more probably dragged to one of the openings the other day was heard to ask the model if the frock she wore was intended for tea, and if the apron went with it. Tunics are short, very short in front, and then drop suddenly to the bottom of the skirt in back. Tabliers from twelve to twenty inches wide are seen on every hand.

Poiret has sent over a good blue serge suit, trimmed with short wide Revolutionary revers of blue and white striped lainage and large bone buttons—very smart, with a box coat and simple straight skirt. But except for this single frock and some coats, Poiret's output seems to me worse than ever. He can

combine colors, but his eccentricity so far oversteps the bounds of good taste that many times his "creations" are really grotesque. I am sure if a comedienne were to wear one of his foulards that I saw at an opening last week she would get a laugh on her appearance without any further comic contrivances. But I certainly do admire Poiret's business sense. He has created a name and a market for his things, even if it be but temporary. Again something different!

One sees a great many Paquin models this year, a few Cheruit—and those most charming—and the usual percentage of Drecoll, for conservative smart houses like Drecoll and Paquin are always sure of success each season. Some of Paquin's evening gowns this season are very beautiful. Speaking of evening gowns reminds me of the models shown this season from Callôt Sœurs, which are very successful and just as characteristic as ever. Their evening gowns are especially good—and so many empire greens. One of the handsomest I saw was in a soft satin—the waist quaintly made with a basque, the neck cut quite high in back and low in front, with a narrow black velvet band outlining it, trimmed at the bust with two steel ornaments from which it dropped to below the waistline. In the opening in front, showing at the back and forming the sleeves, was a soft yellow milanese lace very antique in effect. The skirt was beautifully draped and had a short sash of the satin in back which was fringed at the bottom, while in front were two of the narrow steel-trimmed black velvet bands to match the waist. A most unusual and distinguished frock and ideal for theater and dinner use.

Wraps

Although the wraps for spring and summer are not usually considered so important an item as those for fall and winter, they are, if anything, more attractive in their delicacy and softness. Satins, chiffons and soft taffetas are all shown for evening wear, and new ideas are on every hand. Not one wrap in twenty, with the possible exception of

the chiffons, is made of a single fabric or color. Two and sometimes three tones are beautifully combined and softly blended.

One of the handsomest of Paquin's is of black and a delicate coral pink soft taffeta, the latter running diagonally from shoulder to hem and puffing softly at the bottom where it is held in. A gorgeous American Beauty soft satin is lined with a dull-toned lavender and handsomely trimmed with antique gold embroidery. It is also held in by a band at the bottom, and is one of the prettiest things I have seen from Poiret.

A smart practical wrap of doeskin color satin at the top and black satin from the hips down is made on straight lines, which make it a splendid possibility for motoring as well as evening wear. A pastel-colored paisley *crêpe de Chine* rep, a splendid dust shedding fabric, is also a new idea in a smart motoring or traveling wrap. Quite the handsomest one I have seen, however, came from Bernard, and was a magnificent light blue brocade trimmed and lined with sulphur color satin and decorated with antique lace. It was so delicately beautiful in fabric and color, one could hardly picture a handsomer wrap. Jeanne Lanvin is responsible for a very striking king blue chiffon and black satin embroidered in silver fleur de lys—unusual, but practical and most effective. The establishment at which I saw these is constantly becoming better known for the number of handsome wraps imported each season.

From the Orient

A splendid collection of kimonos, mandarin coats, slippers and a host of other Japanese accessories are sold at remarkably reasonable prices in a Japanese shop in town. I saw a lovely soft silk kimono made in real Japanese fashion, with the long sleeves and the roll at the bottom in a soft rose tone, delicately but profusely embroidered and lined with a delicate pink, for thirteen dollars—truly a bargain. Smart little mandarin coats for either boudoir wear or to be slipped over summer frocks were equally reasonable.

In another department I found ex-

ceptionally reasonable burnished bamboo lamps and shades. Copper and bronze tea kettles, delicately painted place cards, fans and shawls are only a few of the pretty things that crowd the place and render it attractive.

Something New in Neckwear

In one of the smartest shops I came across some new collars that appealed to me so greatly that I bought some and find them smart and convenient. They are stiff linen or piqué hand-embroidered and have a small flat butterfly-shaped embroidered bow in front. One wing of the bow is attached to each side of the front of the collar, and one wing slips through a buttonhole worked in the other one; when pulled out it forms a very attractive finish obviating the necessity for an extra jabot. They are not exactly easy to describe, but I assure you they are very easy to take a liking to.

Chintzes and Cretonnes

For some time I have been hunting for a shop that carried a full line of attractive cretonnes and other similar summer fabrics for hangings and coverings. By a full line I mean all that the market had to offer from the cheapest to the best and at fair prices.

I have found but one shop of which this is true, and discovered that one reason for the very complete line that they carry is the large wholesale as well as retail business that they do. This enables them to offer practically all that there is to be shown in that line, and results in a stock that almost defies description.

From very inexpensive cretonnes, which come in many good designs, to the handsomest English chintzes, French *toile de juoy* and Indian and Persian prints, nothing is omitted. In the line of English goods the cretonnes are especially handsome, and are accompanied by the new glazed chintzes for wall covering, lamp shades, etc. (which may be made up to match). Then in blue and white, the English prints, which come ready made, in curtains, bed spreads,

table covers and a host of other things are quite refreshing with their cool, clean air of old-fashioned primness, added to their possibilities of laundering beautifully. The French *toile de juoy* has a more delicate softness to its designs and is the same fabric used by the French for vests or revers on frocks or for accessories, parasols and the like.

The prints from Persia and India are to my mind the smartest and prettiest of all. They are quite indescribable, their beauty lying in the conventionalized patterns, intricate and purely Oriental in character done in soft rich tones of blue, red, green and yellow, and sometimes, in the case of the Indian ones, dark and bold colors intermingling, but never offending good taste. The curtains, spreads and the like come ready for use like the English prints, and one may also buy bands of varying widths to apply to curtains of a plain material.

The work done in this shop is of the highest class, and it is done as reasonably if not more so than in any other house in town. In fact, if one chooses one of the reproductions of the old-time patterns in a medium-priced cretonne, one may have an entire room fitted at a remarkably moderate figure.

A Practical Device

There are any number of electrical toasters on the market for toasting bread on the table, but they have always seemed to me so clumsy or overintricate (like the egg boilers and a hundred other so-called time and trouble savers) that it appeared simpler to take the bull by the horns and storm the kitchen—if you will pardon the metaphor. But this toaster I am going to recommend is the simplest little thing imaginable. It is very small, although four ordinary slices of bread may be toasted at once, and it is also light—in appearance and in actuality. Tiny wires which may be heated in a second or two zigzag up in the center of it. The toast is placed on the side leaning against other wires which are close enough to the heat to toast it. A flat wire holder fits on the top and may be used to keep the toast hot if necessary

or to heat other things. It works on either a direct or alternating current, and as almost every modern home is furnished with electricity, it is a most handy table accessory and will save much time for the busy housekeeper whose breakfast is apt to be a hurried one.

Quaint Lights

Suitable for a country bedroom or a Colonial room in any home is a new type of candlestick aptly called the Priscilla, which seems, by the way, the favorite name for things Colonial. I wonder why all the other historic maidens are slighted? This is in brass and has a dish-like base, much like most old-fashioned bedroom candlesticks with a thumb ring. But unlike the others, this one has a long lily-shaped globe of decorated glass which protects the candle from draughts and gives it also the name of draught lamp. Another is called the Paul Revere, evidently having reference to the lamp carried in the hand of the aroused resident who holds it high in the air as he peers out at the disheveled rider flying past. This is another attractive one of old time pattern and especially adapted for porch use. At this shop I saw many quaint designs in enamel candlesticks, all copied from well known models of years ago, coming in all colors and making just the right type of light for a room of the period.

Motor Baskets

This is the season when one usually gets the motor fever, and either indulges in a new car or has last season's done over and plans jaunts into the country to make sure that spring is really here.

There are some especially well arranged motor baskets being shown this season that are the embodiment of convenience. The most popular ones are made to fasten on the running board of the car, which is another saving of space. A new idea is a case with a flat table which folds into it compactly and may be easily adjusted and used either for service or in its usual capacity. This case, like most, except the baskets, is made of

leatherette and contains a complete service for four. Three large food boxes, space for two pint Thermos bottles, jars for butter and preserves and cups of white enameled agate ware with wicker handles are only a few of the things carried in it.

A still more complete one has a tea kettle, and is a combination dinner and tea basket, having good-sized plates and platters, three food boxes, water (?) bottle and many other accessories.

London Shops

Many people who go abroad are sorely in need of a practical shopping guide which will suggest to them reliable shops where they are likely to be suited at a reasonable price. Unfortunately, traveling Americans of the leisure class are still considered fair game in many places on the other side, but there are reliable shops, too, which scorn unfair profits and sell merchandise at a fixed price guaranteed not to soar upward for American customers. The SMART SET SHOPPING BUREAU will be glad to recommend several reliable London shops where one may find the best made English blouses, gloves and a host of other necessities at fair prices.

This Month's Records

Although the operatic records are as usual probably the best of the month's output, there are some "summery" ones that will surely appeal to jaded ears.

The popular "Day Dream" from "The Spring Maid," a musical comedy success of the season, is one, and a double record, supposedly for children but so delightful that its appeal is universal, has three of the "Father Goose" collection of songs on one side and a catchy banjo "Wooden Shoe Dance" on the other.

Otto Goritz sings the song of the old witch from "Hansel and Gretel" in his inimitable fashion. Farrar's rendering of "Oh, for the Wings of a Dove," that lilting air of Mendelssohn's, is quite charming, and the Valentine death scene from "Faust" by Scotti and the Grand Opera Chorus is one of the best.

Montgomery and Stone give a remarkably clear record of one of the song hits from "The Old Town" and an amusing dialogue.

Another splendid record is a well selected arrangement of operatic masterpieces played by Pryor's band.

Furniture

There is a shop just west of the Avenue where one may pick up genuine pieces of old furniture, carefully repaired and in good condition, at fair prices—no easy task today when the old furniture market has fewer pieces to offer than ever before.

The craze for mission things is past, and it looks much as though we were on the verge of a "Colonial" craze—to use the term generally employed for furniture of the type brought over by the early settlers. I hope that it will not run rampant as the mission craze did, for it spoils the idea for quiet people of good taste when they see a so-called copy of their own beautiful highboy offered in mahogany for \$29.50. The term "mahogany" is as much a snare as "Oriental rug," and it is funny to see the various woods that cheerfully masquerade under it.

But in this shop, where one sees everything from huge four-posters and corner cupboards to the popular so-called "Lazy Susan" (the round revolving stand to hold things on one's table and obviate an extra trip to the pantry if one is without a maid), it is a comforting thought that things are what they seem. Many times part of a sideboard is old, the remainder new; sometimes two old carved posts decorate a chest of drawers that is a reproduction of the original, but in this case one is so informed and the piece is sold as a reproduction.

I saw here a tea set delightfully quaint in its outline, the long graceful spout to the high curved teapot and the square-cornered sugar bowl reminiscent of ancient times, that was called the Priscilla, and was decorated with a gray and white picture of that lady and John Alden. There were something like twenty-seven pieces at an absurdly low price.

Our Shopping Bureau

It was only a few months ago that the SMART SET started this Shopping Department, which, besides forecasting fashions and noting the current news in the world of clothes, has also described hundreds of interesting articles found in the New York shops.

The growth of this department has been remarkable, and now, in response to innumerable inquiries and requests, we have decided to extend its usefulness and open a Shopping Bureau for the benefit of the readers of the magazine.

THE SMART SET SHOPPING DEPARTMENT will execute any shopping commissions for you gratis. It will gladly suggest what to buy or give any advice regarding shopping and the New York shops. In other words, we are putting our knowledge of these matters at your service without any charge, and trust you will make use of the department and continue to find it of interest.

We are prepared to buy anything for you: wearing apparel, furnishings for the home or miscellaneous articles such as trunks, leather goods, motor accessories, jewelry, favors and prizes, etc. The following suggestions are offered:

1.—When the price of the articles desired is known, a cheque or money order made out to the SMART SET SHOPPING DEPARTMENT should be inclosed with the order. Any money remaining over and above the purchase price will be immediately refunded.

2.—No accounts can be opened. No exceptions will be made to this rule.

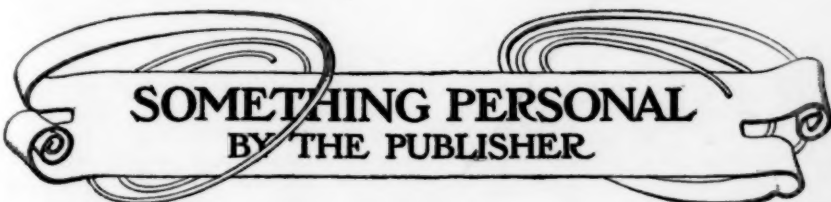
3.—Unless otherwise ordered, all goods will be sent by express, charges C. O. D.

4.—When writing, kindly be as explicit as possible in describing the article desired, giving measurements or size when necessary and approximate price you care to pay.

5.—Articles will not be sent on approval except by special arrangement. This is due to a rule existing in many of the shops.

6.—There is no charge for any service offered by the department.

Address all correspondence to
EDITOR SMART SET SHOPPING DEPT.,
452 Fifth Avenue, New York City, N. Y.



SOMETHING PERSONAL BY THE PUBLISHER

I RECEIVED an anonymous letter the other day. I was not alarmed. In fact, the author is so evidently the "Well Wisher" he signed himself that I will here make reply to him and to all who hold a like opinion. Part of his letter ran thus:

DEAR MR. THAYER: I and a number of other writers have read with much interest of your purchase of the SMART SET. It is everywhere agreed that in changing its policy, etc., you should change its notorious title. . . . If you want writers to send you the first choice of their best work, you ought to do this. The SMART SET has always suffered from its name. . . . It is to be hoped that you will give it a new birth. . . . You will do well to let us have this maltreated periodical as "*Thayer's Magazine*—formerly the SMART SET" or something of the kind. . . . Renaming it will pay.

Sincerely,
A WRITER AND WELL WISHER.

Now what does he mean when he says that the SMART SET has always suffered from its name? Suffered in quality of contents or suffered financially? Does he seriously maintain that there has ever been a dearth of original fiction in the magazine? Can he point to a single volume which has not upheld the reputation for cleverness given the SMART SET by its first editor? The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and those who sit regularly at the board seem content. The SMART SET is not on trial. It has been a success from the beginning—a literary success, a commercial success.

But past performance aside, would I, as suggested, do well to change the name

of the magazine to "*Thayer's Magazine*"? If a more artistic publication or increased profits were the only factors involved, I could, doubtless, to quote a fellow publisher, "crowd my native modesty" so far. There is a stronger argument against such a change, however. In my opinion a personal name should only appear in the title of a magazine when that magazine clearly expresses the individuality of a single editor. *McClure's*, *Munsey's*, *Hampton's* are properly so named. The *American*, by the same token, is improperly named; it should be *Phillips's*. Men of exceptional power with the pen shape the destinies of these publications. But the SMART SET is not the expression of a single mind. It sums up the best judgment of several widely different minds. Therein, we believe, lies the secret of its infinite variety.

Speaking of changes, there seems to be some diversity of opinion about the cover of the SMART SET. Several of the readers who embraced my invitation to make this corner of the magazine a clearing house of ideas have commented upon this point. One correspondent writes that he heard two women, who were buying the holiday issue, object with great animation to the change in the cover. Other readers—distributed geographically from New Jersey to Nebraska—declare that with its "dreadful color" and "silly couple" our cover design is the least clever thing about the

magazine. As for my judicial self, I am inclined to echo the familiar phrase of dear old Joe Jefferson and say: "Well—yes *and* no." I believe that the cover of the SMART SET needs not so much a new birth as new clothes, and I have accordingly commissioned James Montgomery Flagg, whose brilliant work as an illustrator is so widely known, to undertake the transformation. You will, I think, pronounce the cover of the June SMART SET really smart. If you don't—say why.

Your exploring eye will next remark that the SMART SET has a frontispiece. Though a business man, I have a fondness for the poets, and intend that the frontispiece of the SMART SET shall frequently recall some masterpiece of verse which has sung its way into the heart of man. The June issue will therefore contain Rose Cecil O'Neill's remarkable interpretation of Keats's *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*. Reproduced in two colors, this picture cannot fail to awaken in America the same keen interest that greeted its appearance in the *Salon des Beaux Arts*, Paris.

As for the contents of the forthcoming numbers, let me say that on assuming control my first thought was of the editorial management. To the very capable staff I found installed I added as associate editors two well known writers, Mark Lee Luther and Louise Closser Hale. The SMART SET for June and succeeding issues, therefore, must pass muster with all the editors and the

publisher himself. It is impossible in this space even to outline the good things we have in store for you. I cannot even call the roll of our contributors. Suffice it to say that you will find all your old favorites and many a new writer of brilliant promise.

It only remains for me to speak of the advertising pages. But a few years ago the SMART SET carried a large volume of advertising. The reasons why it does not now need not concern us; they are already in the past. Let us face the future. To certain popular low-priced monthlies the advertising section is a vital necessity. Selling their product at less than cost, they strive by means of large editions to obtain such high prices from advertisers as will make up the manufacturing deficit and secure a profit for themselves. From these worries the SMART SET is happily exempt, and it is accordingly possible for us to carry out certain ideas which I am sure will interest the general reader no less than the advertiser. Put in a nutshell, our plan is to make the advertising pages of the magazine as distinctive and interesting in their way as the literary contents. In carrying out this policy, which begins with the next issue, all announcements to secure presentation in our advertising section must not only be reliable and high grade, but must conform in illustration and typography to a standard which we have designated the "SMART SET Style."

Looking forward to the June number—

John Adam Thayer